the struggle between Jews and Zionists

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In the Shadow of the Holocaust

YOSEF GRODZINSKY

The story of Jews in Displaced Persons Camps and their forced role in the founding of Israel

FOREWARD BY RABBI MICHAEL LERNER

In the Shadow

of the

Holocaust

The Struggle Between Jews and Zionists in the Aftermath of World War II

Yosef Grodzinsky

Common Courage Press Monroe, Maine

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Front cover photo: Jewish immigrants in New York, 1948. Courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv.
Back cover photo: A Palestine immigration certificate issued by the Warsaw office of the Jewish Agency in 1938 to the author's father, that enabled his pre-war departure from Poland.

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*In memory of my grandfather, Yosef Grodzinsky, and my grandmother, Reyzl Grodzinsky (*neé *Kretchmer) who did not even reach a DP camp*

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Foreword

Yosef Grodzinsky has an important story to tell. And it is a story that will make many aware of the deeply flawed nature of the Zionist movement in the 1940s.

Zionism did not have the support of a majority of Jews before the Holocaust. But even after the genocide of millions of our people, the Zionist movement had ambiguous support. Though most of us were taught that the survivors of the Holocaust, living in Displaced Persons Camps, were hungering to get to the Land of Israel where they could start a new life, it turns out that while most of these survivors supported the creation of a Jewish state, most of them did not choose to live in such a state. Many Zionist activists, on the other hand, thought they knew better what would be in the best interests of the survivors, and so the Zionists manipulated and sometimes coerced these survivors into coming to Palestine and serving in the army that was being developed to fight for national self-determination and the creation of a Jewish state. From the standpoint of many of the Zionists sent to deal with the displaced persons camps, the survivors were part of a larger Diasporic irrationality that still, even after the Holocaust, could not see that Jews would be in danger everywhere unless they had their own state. Rather than treating them as whole human beings who had every right to make their own choices, the Zionist activists saw them as severely lacking in the capacity for rational judgment, and hence in need of the benevolent assistance of those who had been smart enough to get out of Europe long before the anti-Semitic virus had taken hold.

Zionism is not the only movement which has had moments in which it cannot recognize the humanity of the people whom it hopes to liberate—and not necessarily the worst. The long history of social change movements, from the labor movement to the socialist and communist movements, presents us with many

similar tales of zealous activists who coerce, manipulate and disrespect the very people whose interests they claim to represent. And the same story can be told in other places as well—the welfare workers and teachers and government workers who go into civic work in order to be of service to others but who eventually end up acting in disrespectful and coercive ways to the constituencies that they had hoped to serve; the feminists who find themselves under attack from other women who believe that the activists are trying to impose an agenda that is disrespectful to their lives as mothers and wives in building strong families; the liberators of Iraq who think that they know best how to save the population from Saddam Hussein and end up engaged in a war of occupation against the population they came to save.

The flawed nature of Zionism is not a sufficient reason to discard its fundamental vision that the Jewish people deserve a nation state like every other nation. But being "a nation like every other nation" becomes increasingly problematic in a world in which nation states themselves are increasingly in danger of becoming the major obstacle to developing ecologically sound and social-justice respecting approaches that could save the world from impending environmental disaster. If the messianic vision that "nation shall not lift up sword against nation" seems increasingly impossible to imagine, then it may be necessary to begin to imagine a world that has made nation states irrelevant. But as long as nation states persist, we have a duty to hold them responsible to treat human beings in the most generous and respectful way possible.

Many of us who love Israel have become increasingly despairing that its current government could ever come close to embodying the basic respect for human rights of the Palestinian people that the world rightly demands of a state that claims to be part of the family of nations. We know that Israel has lost its way and needs a fundamental transformation. There are others, however, who will argue that Israel was always filled with an arrogance and insensitivity that was core to the Zionist enterprise.

For them, Yosef Grodzinsky's book will provide vital confirmation, showing that this arrogance was there even before it was directed at Palestinians—when it manifested in an insensitivity to the needs of the survivors of the Holocaust. For me and for others, Grodzinsky's work reconfirms a basic understanding that human life is deeply flawed, and badly in need of the healing and repair that we call "tikkun"—a healing that is both political, psychological and spiritual. May this book contribute to people getting off their high horses, recognizing our common flaws, and moving toward the creation of a movement for genuine tikkun among the Jewish people, and among all peoples.

—Rabbi Michael Lerner
Editor, *Tikkun Magazine*

Dramatis Personae (lead roles)

DPs

Moshé Ajzenbud—Journalist, Bundist newspapers, American Zone
Jakob Celnik—Art teacher, Camp Nei Freimann
Yitzhak Elster—Camp Styer, Austria
Dr. Zalman Grinberg—Chairman, *Z.K.*, American Zone
Dr. Shmu'el Gringauz—President, *Z.K.*, American Zone
Chava Rosenfarb—Camp Bergen-Belsen
Yosef Rosensaft—President, *Z.K.*, British Zone
David Treger—Member of Prezidium, *Z.K.*, American Zone

Allied officers and commanders

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower—Allied Supreme Commander in Europe, 1945
Gen. Joseph T. McNarney, US Army—Allied Supreme Commander in Europe, 1946-1947
Gen. Lucius D. Clay, US Army—Commander in Chief, US Occupation Force in Germany, 1947-1949
Major Irving Heymont, US Army—Commander, Camp Landsberg, 1945
Major Abraham Hyman, US Army—Deputy Advisor on Jewish Affairs, 1945-1951

Jewish-American activists

Professor William Haber—Advisor on Jewish Affairs, 1948
Judge Simon Rifkind—Advisor on Jewish Affairs, 1945

Zionist envoys in Europe

Shalom Adler-Rudel—Jewish Agency
Shaul Avigur (Meirov)—Head, *Mossad*
Col. Yehuda Ben-David—Deputy Commander, *Haganáh* European Theater
Dr. Chayim Hoffmann (Yahil)—Head of Jewish Agency Delegation, Munich

Capt. Aharon Khoter-Yishai—The Jewish Brigade, Royal British Army
Ze'ev Schind (*alias* Danny)—*Mossad*
Brig. Gen. Nahum Shadmi—Commander, *Haganáh* European Theater

Zionist leaders in Jerusalem

David Ben-Gurion—Chairman, Jewish Agency for Palestine
Eliyahu Dobkin—Head of Immigration Department, Jewish Agency for Palestine
Moshé Sharett—Head of Political Department, Jewish Agency for Palestine
Dr. Chaim Weizmann—President, World Zionist Organization

Rabbis and religious activists

Rabbi Abraham Klausner, US Army
Rabbi Judah Nadich, US Army
Dr. Yitzhak Levin, *Agudath Yisrael*
Dr. Shmuel Schmidt, *Agudath Yisrael*
Dr. Zorah Warhaftig, *Mizrahi*

US and UK politicians and diplomats

Clement Attlee—Prime Minister, United Kingdom, 1945-1951
Judge Earl Harrison—Chair, the Harrison Commission of Inquiry, 1945
Henry Morgenthau—Secretary of Treasury, United States Government, 1934-1945
Harry S. Truman—President of the United States, 1945-1952

Organizations

ACC—Allied Control Council. A joint coordinating body established by the Allies in Germany immediately after Liberation.
Agudath Yisrael—A religious Jewish group, founded in 1912 to promote the sovereignty of *Torah* (Holy Scriptures) in Jewish life.

B'richáh (Flight)—Organization for illegal immigration of Jews into Palestine, mostly concerned with the establishment of escape routes from Europe to Palestine.

DPX—Displaced Persons Executive, established by the Allied Forces in Germany.

Ha'apaláh—Organization for illegal immigration into Palestine, mostly concerned with the transfer of illegal immigrants to Palestine by sea.

Haganáh—Organization for self-defense of Jews in Palestine, later became IDF.

HIAS—Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, a group dedicated to helping immigrant Jews.

IDF—Israel Defense Force, the armed forces of the State of Israel.

IGCR—Inter Governmental Committee on Refugees. Created at the Evian Conference in 1938 to solve Europe's refugee problem, it helped in the resettlement of DPs.

IRO (PCIRO)—International Refugee Organization (Preparatory Committee), established in 1947 to succeed UNRRA.

JDC—American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Founded in 1914 to assist Palestinian Jews caught in the throes of World War, it has been concerned with providing aid to Jews in need worldwide.

Jewish Agency for Palestine—The main governing body of the *Yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine, in the pre-state days.

JRU—Jewish Relief Units. British groups that arrived in Germany after Liberation, in order to help in the rehabilitation of Jewish DPs.

Mizrahi—A Zionist religious movement, established in Vilnius in 1902 by Rabbi Ya'akov Reines, in order to bring about a renewal of "the people of Israel in the Land of Israel according to the *Torah* of Israel," and to make *Eretz Yisrael* a spiritual center.

Mossad la-'aliyáh bet (Institute for B-immigration)—A clandestine Zionist organization for illegal immigration to Palestine.

ORT—Organization for Rehabilitation and Training, an

American Jewish organization that provides professional and vocational training to Jewish immigrants and refugees.

UNRRA—United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, 1943-1947.

Va'ad ha-hatzallah—Rescue Commission, established during World War II by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, in an attempt to save Jews.

Z.K., American Zone—The Central Committee (*Zentral Komitet*) of Liberated Jews, Bavaria.

Z.K., British Zone—The Central Committee (*Zentral Komitet*) of Liberated Jews, Bergen Belsen.

Main Locations

Buchenwald
Bergen-Belsen (Hohne)
Fahrenwald
Feldafing
Jerusalem
Landsberg
Munich
New York
Zeilsheim

A Short Hebrew and Yiddish Glossary

'Aliyáh—Ascendance (Heb.). A term reserved for Palestine/Israel immigration of Jews.

Do'ikayt—Here-ness (Yid.). A term describing a doctrine of the Jewish Labor Bund, according to which Jews should strive to partial national determination, or autonomy, here, i.e. in the Diaspora rather than in a Jewish state (whether in Palestine or elsewhere).

Eretz Yisrael—The land of Israel (Heb.). A term referring to Palestine, broadly construed.

Gachal—Acronym for *Giyus Chutz La-'aretz*—Foreign Draft (Heb.). A term referring to conscripts who were drafted abroad in 1948.

Galut—Exile (Heb.). The state of the People of Israel in the Diaspora.

Golah—Diaspora (Heb.). The Jewish communities outside Palestine/Israel.

Giyus—Draft (Heb.). The process of drafting for the Israel Defense Force.

Hakhshara—Training (Heb.). A term referring to a framework of training for agricultural work that was established by the Zionists.

Kibbutz—(Heb., pl. *kibbutzim*). An agricultural collective of the type founded in Palestine throughout the 20th Century.

Ma'apilim—Climbers (Heb.). A term reserved to illegal immigrants to Palestine.

Machal—Acronym for *Mitnadvey CHutz La-'aretz*—Foreign Volunteers (Heb.). A term referring to volunteers who came from abroad (mostly from England, the United States, Canada, and South Africa) to help the IDF in 1948.

Mas 'am lochem—A tax for a fighting nation (Heb.). A tax levied on DPs in 1948 by the Zionist leadership, to help finance the war in Palestine.

She'erit ha-pleyta—The Surviving Remnant (Heb.). A term referring to the survivors of the Holocaust (borrowed from the Old Testament).

Sho'ah—Catastrophe (Heb.). A term reserved to the Nazi inflict-

ed Jewish Holocaust.

Shtetl—Little town (Yid). A term referring to Jewish towns in Eastern Europe.

T'kumah—Resurgence (Heb.). A term reserved to the establishment of the State of Israel, referring to the revival of Jewish nationhood, usually juxtaposed to *Sho'ah*.

Tarbut—Culture (Heb.). Name of a network of Hebrew schools that existed in Poland and in Lithuania until World War II.

Yeshiva—A sitting (Heb., pl. *Yeshivos*). Denotes a Rabbinical school.

Yishuv—Settlement (Heb.). The Jewish community in Palestine in pre-state days.

Zentral Komitet—Central Committee (Yid.). the main governing body of the Jewish DP camps in post-war Germany. Existed in the British and the American zones.

Archives Used for This Book

AA—Avodah (labor) Archive, Tel Aviv
Center for Education (ha-Merkaz le-chinuch) files—envoys abroad
Va'ad ha-Po'el files
Jewish Agency files—ha-Merkaz le-chinuch

BA—Bund Archives, YIVO Institute, New York
Section MG—"Bundishe grupn in daitshland"
Section ME—"Daitshe lagern"

CZA—Central Zionist Archives, Jerusalem
S6—Immigration Department files
S25—Political Department files
S86—Envoys Department files
S100—Protocols of the Zionist Directorate
L47—Jewish Agency Offices, Frankfurt
A140—Personal Archive, Shalom Adler-Rudel
A382—Personal Archive, Chayim Yahil

DPG—Archives of the DP camps in Germany, YIVO Institute, New York

DPA—Archives of the DP camps in Austria, YIVO Institute, New York

HA—*Haganáh* Archive, Tel Aviv
Division 14—*Ha'apaláh*, *B'richáh*, *'Akurim* (DPs)
Division 36—*Haganáh* in Diaspora
Galili files
Ha'apaláh Project Archive—Tel Aviv University (now defunct; some of its records and microfilms have been moved to IDF; others are located in HA)
IDF—Israel Defense Force Archives, Giv'atayim
General Staff/HR (*Matkal/Aka*) files
Ministry of Defense/Administrative (*Minhal*) Division files
Reports of Gachal draft
Research files of the History Division
ISA—Israel State Archives, Jerusalem
Foreign Ministry files, Germany reports
LS—Leo Schwartz Archive, YIVO Institute, New York

Prologue: Jews versus Zionists

A Lunchtime Encounter

Some time ago I was standing in line in a sandwich shop in Montreal. Circumstances made me talk to the person in front of me, which immediately revealed my Hebrew accent. It was something that my interlocutor—a nicely dressed woman in her fifties—was not about to miss. "Things are bad there," she said, ostensibly referring to the hostilities in the Middle East. I nodded, trying to avoid a political discussion as the line was moving, bringing me closer to my lunch. Yet the woman persisted. "They just want us out of there," she offered, seemingly trying to tell me something about herself. Anxious to leave, I made a generic comment about how complicated things are, picked up my lunch bag, and disappeared, my stomach being a top priority at that moment.

But wait a minute, I said to myself as I was walking away: What exactly was she thinking? How can "they" want "us" out of "there", if "they" are in the Middle East, and "us" in a Montreal sandwich shop? And where am I in all this: On the "they" or the "us" side?

Come on now, I can hear a reader think, you know exactly what she meant: She was a Canadian Jew; you are an Israeli Jew; Israel is the guardian of Jewish interests, and a safe haven for the Jews; the Palestinians, she probably thought, want Israel as a Jewish state abolished; a Jewish state under threat puts the guardian and safe haven in jeopardy, which threatens Jews wherever they are. The woman's exclamation was nothing but a proper description of the way things are.

These are indeed common beliefs that are not questioned very often. In North America at least, Israel is perceived as a

guardian of Jewish interests as well as a safe haven for Jews. Yet, is this perception grounded in reality? Have Jews in trouble been protected by Israel, or sought and found shelter there? Has the Zionist accomplishment—Israeli statehood—made the world safer for Jews? Is there a real sense in which the term "us" can cover both me, an Israeli Jew from Tel Aviv, and a Canadian Jewish woman in a Montreal sandwich shop? Having spent the past twenty years between Israel and the North American East Coast, I have grappled with these questions incessantly. Over the years I have made some attempts to grasp the reality of the relationship between Jews and the State of Israel from up close. Observations I made seemed to extend beyond matters Jewish, and to bear on our understanding of certain general issues regarding ethnicity and nationhood. This book is about some of these observations. Based on new archival materials, it shows how Zionism—first as a movement for national liberation, then reincarnated as the sovereign State of Israel—did not always act to protect weak, persecuted Jews. At critical junctures, when their help was needed, Zionist leaders, activists, and planners focused on narrowly defined needs of their movement, rather than on the people whose problem their enterprise was intended to solve. Worse yet, there were times at which the Zionists even coerced and harassed helpless Jews in the name of their cause. These are serious allegations, that some might find hard to swallow. But the factual record on which they are founded—a record I was not thrilled to discover—is weighty and solid. We will get to it, but first, it is important to understand the backdrop against which the story later unfolds.

Identity and Geography

At the heart of the matter is the question whether the Zionist program and its product—the State of Israel—is the ultimate manifestation of Jewish identity. Can the latter exist in the Diaspora, independent of Zionism, and without a designated ter-

ritory? Is Hebrew the exclusive Jewish language? Must a Jew be religiously Jewish?

The Zionists have always given clear answers to these questions, whereas attitudes among the Diaspora Jews diverged. Essential views are typified by the pre-Holocaust exchange between Fritz Baer in Jerusalem and Salo Baron in New York. The Zionist outlook on Jewishness is all embracing: Jewish nationalism *is* Zionism; Hebrew *is* the national language; a Jew *is* a member of the Jewish religion. Fritz (Yitzhak) Baer, doyen of Jewish history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, helped shape the view espoused by the Zionist leadership. "The *Galut* (exile)," he wrote in the 1930s, "means that the Jews have left their natural place. But everything that leaves its natural place loses thereby its natural support until it returns. The dispersion of Israel among the nations is unnatural. Since the Jews manifest a national unity, even in a higher sense than the other nations, it is necessary that they return to a state of actual unity."[1] Baer's clear world view had immense influence on the thinking of leaders and activists (first and foremost among them David Ben-Gurion, whose penchant for history was well known).

Diaspora Jews, especially those in the West who had more freedom of movement than others, tended to acknowledge the multiplicity of future plans for Jews, which to them legitimized multiple Jewish agendas. Salo Baron of Columbia University, the first professor of Jewish Studies at an American university and Baer's contemporary, presented a radically different view. To him, Jewish ideology and politics correlated with migration patterns and residential loci, in a way that did not deprive a Jew of a national identity: "One essential symptom of Jewish history, which appears to be of particular significance nowadays, is that the life of the Jewish people more or less regularly takes place in worlds set apart from one another."[2] The Baer/Baron debate, then, revolved around issues of unity versus diversity of Jewish fates, choices, and identities.

To many, the Holocaust resolved the issue decisively. In its

shadow, it has often been said, Jews could no longer be safe anywhere but in *Eretz Yisrael*, their homeland. The subsequent success of the Zionists in achieving statehood sealed the debate. Baer's teachings prevailed, and their influence on the way Jewish history is studied and taught has lasted until today. At least in Israel, where a considerable portion of Jewish history is currently written, Jewish (as opposed to Israeli or Zionist) events subsequent to 1945 are rarely discussed in this context. Thus, despite the fact that the history of most Jews has been but loosely connected to Zionism, finding a course on post-Holocaust Jewish history in an academic department is rather difficult (unless it is connected to Israel). For many, Jewish history seems to have come to an end, making way for the history of Zionism and the Jewish State.

The Holocaust and After

An understanding of our present state sometimes calls for an examination of how we got here. Aware of the centrality of Zionism today, I decided to explore my subject matter by looking at a critical historical juncture, where the Jewish-Zionist-Israeli connection would carve up identities in a potentially revealing way. Indeed, I found some rare instances in which identity within a Jewish community diverged in a surprising fashion. An empirical scientist by training, I sought evidence from primary sources, which led me to various archives. My journey into this dusty world brought unexpected findings. I found evidence for post-Holocaust attempts to express Jewish identity and propose a national agenda in a manner independent of the Zionist project. It was in these archives as well, that I discovered disturbing evidence about Zionist efforts to suppress such attempts.

I was surprised. I had previously been aware that Jewish identity was not monolithic in Europe and America, but I thought that this was true only of the pre-World War II years.

That is, I knew about the Jewish Labor Bund party in Eastern Europe, and of the animosity between Bundists and the Zionists. At issue was not a mere quibble between two rival political groups within the Jewish nation. These were deeply conflicting interpretations of the Jewish national agenda, a cause for much dispute since 1897, when both the Zionist movement and the Labor Bund were founded. While Zionists sought a land of their own, Bundists adhered to the *do'ikayt* ("here-ness") doctrine, that sought a limited form of autonomy for Jews on whatever territory they resided. As well, when the Zionists attempted to connect to historical religious roots, and declared Hebrew as their national language, Bundists chose Yiddish, then the dominant vernacular in most Eastern European Jewish centers. The two movements, then, were as clearly set apart as Baer's position was opposed to Baron's (although the latter's position had little to say about political autonomy).

Until the Holocaust, the Zionist form of Jewish nationalism had but a limited success in the Jewish world. Zionism was endorsed by a minority of Jews in Europe, Asia, North Africa and America. In Europe, the Bund built a solid base for itself in Poland (and later the United States), after having been banned in the Soviet Union.

That much I knew. But I was also taught that the Holocaust convinced virtually all Jewish factions, and certainly the surviving Jews in Europe, that only the Zionist program posited an adequate solution to "the Jewish problem." Now I was about to discover that even then, European Jews did not really unite under a Zionist flag. There was much more to be found, but I should first tell the reader how and why I came to ask these questions.

The course of events during extreme crises may sometimes serve as a laboratory for nationalism. Looking for instances in which the immediate interests of Jews and Zionists did not necessarily coalesce, I first turned to the hardest of times in the modern era—to events surrounding the terrible tragedy inflicted

on the European Jews by the Nazis. I learned about the many studies of the relations between the American Jews, the Zionists, and the dying Jews of Europe. Much has been said about the conduct of Jewish and Zionist organizations during the War—about rescue operations that were attempted, and about those that could (or should) have been attempted. For decades, this has been the focus of endless debates. Did the Jews of the West do everything they could to save their brethren? Should the Zionists have frozen all efforts to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, and focused on attempts to save the European Jewry from extermination instead of on nation building in Palestine? These hard questions have been repeatedly asked, with as many answers as there are researchers. One thing is clear, though: It is exceedingly difficult to obtain a clear view of rescue efforts during the War—whether possible or actual—because their likelihood of succeeding was slim. Europe was occupied, and the murderous Nazi regime could preclude most fathomable rescue efforts. It has been alleged that the Zionists were reluctant to divert resources from the struggle towards statehood in Palestine to rescue operations in Europe. It was said that the effort to establish a Jewish state in Palestine had taken on a life of its own: So concerned were the Jews in Palestine in nation building, that they abandoned the original cause of their movement—to serve as a safe haven for Jews.[3] Likewise, American Jewish organizations were accused of guarding their own interests as a minority in the United States, which discouraged them from putting energy into efforts to rescue the European Jews.[4] These are serious allegations, to which the standard counter retort is not unconvincing: It is usually said that the significance of rescue during the Holocaust is inflated, that the discussion is mostly irrelevant, because the Nazis had absolute control over the fate of the European Jews, while their brethren in Palestine, England and the United States had little political (let alone military) power. Rescue attempts, it is argued, were therefore bound to fail anyway.[5] To what extent these arguments are valid is not of our concern. What is important, rather, is the conclusion: Teasing

apart Jewish identities and interests in the context of the Holocaust is not an easy task.[6]

In light of this difficulty, how does one examine different Jewish identities in the context of the Holocaust? My solution was to focus on the immediate post-war years. Europe was now flooded with refugees, among them many Jewish survivors of the Holocaust, whose lives were still in danger. Just like in the war years, there was room for rescue efforts (whose nature would be somewhat different from rescue during the War). Yet unlike before, the Nazi regime was gone, replaced by friendly Allied Forces. In this context, I thought, an examination of the Jewish-Zionist relationship might uncover something. Would a monolithic Jewish identity emerge, as the Zionists would have it? Did an organized Jewish leadership, at that point mostly Zionist, act as guardian of all Jews, even of those who did not endorse the Zionist program? It would be at this juncture, I reasoned, that the variety of Jewish agendas, the multiplicity of Jewish aspirations, plans and destinies would become evident.

During the War, it was the Nazis who dictated the order; once they were defeated and the Allies took control, new possibilities emerged. Homeless, miserable Jewish refugees, their bodies emaciated and their souls scarred by the terrible experiences in the camps or in hiding places, saddened by the loss of family, friends, home and property, were huddled in Assembly Centers and Displaced Person camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy. To these places, Jewish organizations—Zionist and non-Zionist alike—dispatched envoys and relief workers, who came to help survivors rebuild their lives. This was before the State of Israel existed, yet the Zionists were already well-established—with resources, contacts, and influence—and were preparing for the ultimate stages of their campaign to convince the world of the imminent necessity and justification of a Jewish state. Did they use their power and resources to try to bring Holocaust survivors to a safe haven? Did they provide shelter, support and help regardless of political belief, future aims, and mental and

physical ability? Were survivors abused, coerced, or forced to act against their will in the service of an ideology or a political agenda which they did not endorse? These are the questions I tried to answer in this book. In doing so, I have relied on much heretofore unpublished, primary archival material, which will, I hope, lead to better understanding of the Jewish-Zionist connection, and lead the Montreal woman and perhaps a few others to reexamine their beliefs regarding the strength of the commitment of the Jewish state to them.

Zion Meets Diaspora in the DP Camps

The camps for stateless people established in Germany, Austria and Italy after World War II initially gave shelter to millions of Europeans who had lost their homes. Among these people were liberated Jews. Later known as Displaced Persons (DPs), the refugees received help from the Allied Forces and the United Nations through its Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA), established for this purpose. The Jews among them, who as we shall see were quickly separated from non-Jews, received additional care from Jewish and Zionist relief organizations. This book is about the plight of these Jewish refugees (who would later be joined by others who would flee from Eastern Europe) in the DP camps during the years of their existence, that is, between 1945 and 1951. It is a piece of contemporary German history, having taken place on mostly German soil; it is also a Jewish story, and a Zionist one as well; finally, it is a history of the only case of a massive refugee problem in the 20th century that was truly resolved. The story of the DPs of World War II, and of the Jews among them in particular, is thus in many ways unique.

At Liberation in May 1945 some Jews just freed from slavery were loitering in the Allied Occupation Zones. Others were flowing into these zones in large numbers, hoping for a more promising, less oppressive, future. What the refugees (now

awarded Displaced Person status) wanted is difficult to know. As we shall see, their overtly expressed declarations did not always reflect their true desires, later evidenced by actions. It appears that most of them were less concerned with profound ideological questions than with individual safety; rather naturally, most of these refugees concentrated their attention on a secure and promising personal future than on the common good.

Into these zones, hundreds of Zionist envoys now flocked. What drew them to the DP camps? Why was the Zionist leadership in Jerusalem willing to dedicate resources (of considerable magnitude, as we shall see) to this enterprise? What exactly did they do there? What authority was behind their actions? It is instructive to see the decisions of the leadership in light of the general goals of the Zionist project in Palestine.

As commonly presented, the struggle for a Jewish national home in Western Palestine proceeded along two obvious dimensions: Land and people. Obtaining control over the designated territory led to a war with the surrounding Arab states, as well as to a conflict with the other claimants—the indigenous Arabs of Palestine; yet a necessity no less pressing for the emerging state was more Jews. By the mid-1940s, the struggle to conquer the land was nearing completion, and Zionist organizers were now focused on the final conquest, that of Man. They followed Ben-Gurion's dictum that "the essence of Zionism is one of a populating endeavor, to populate *Eretz Yisrael* with multitudes of Jews."[7] For that, *chomer 'enoshi tov* (good human material, a phrase Zionist organizers frequently used) was needed. Convincing Jews to uproot themselves and move to Palestine proved to be a formidable task: When life is good, people tend to stay where they are. Candidates for Palestine immigration therefore had to be Jews whose life was not good. Post-Holocaust DPs, who lived in miserable conditions, became a human reserve of great immigration potential, hence a prime target for the Zionists, who planned to transfer the entire DP population to Palestine.

On the face of it, this task was easy: Mostly Holocaust survivors, the DPs were supposedly convinced by now that a Jewish state was the only viable solution. All it should have taken was thus immigration permits—as Palestine was still in British hands—and a sufficient number of boats that would ship the DPs to the safe haven. This, indeed, has been the official line. It has been said that with few exceptions, the shadow of the Holocaust made almost all the DPs want to go to Palestine; as immigration quotas were extremely limited while the British were in control, only few could enter; yet on May 15th, 1948, the British left and with them went the quotas. An independent Jewish state was declared, and its doors were immediately opened; previously unable to immigrate to Palestine, the rest of the DPs now rushed to make *'aliyáh* (immigration) to Israel, and became proud citizens of the Jewish state.[8] This is what I learned in school.

Yet the documentary record I found in archives helped me discover two numerical discrepancies which call for an explanation:

a. Polls taken in the camps at different times indicate that the vast majority of Jewish DPs (80-96.8 percent) stated their intention to immigrate to Palestine. If not to Palestine, they said, they would rather go back to the crematoria of the death camps. Yet, of the hundreds of thousands, only 40 percent (at most) actually went to Palestine/Israel, despite the fact that other migration routes were more difficult to follow at any point in time.

b. A voluntary draft drive in the camps for the Israel Defense Force (IDF), then in formation, drew only 700 volunteers in the spring of 1948 (0.3 percent of the 250,000 Jewish camp dwellers then). "We have already smelled fire," said many survivors, reluctant to go, "let others smell it now." The failed attempt to mobilize volunteers led the Zionists to enact forced conscription of DPs in Germany and Austria to the IDF. Just months later, the headcount of camp draftees who fulfilled their "national duty" went up eleven fold to 7,800, making an important addition (6.5 percent) to a small army that altogether had less than 120,000 soldiers.

What happened? Why did so many say they wanted to go to Palestine, when only a minority actually did so? What justified forced conscription of survivors to fight for a cause they did not necessarily support, in a land they had never seen, and whose language they did not speak? How was a non-sovereign body able to force conscripts on German and Austrian soil to embark boats that took them to the battlefield in Palestine?

To forecast, the Zionists successfully took control of the Jewish DP camps early on (Chapters 2-3), which later enabled them to enforce a draft (despite occasional objections of the Military Government). Zionists planners and organizers followed a clear line of reasoning: To them, a Jew not wanting to go to Palestine adversely affected the struggle for the establishment of an independent state in two ways. First, it was a net loss to the effort to populate Palestine. At the time independence was declared in May 1948, the entire Jewish population of Palestine was slightly over 600,000;[9] the Jewish DPs, whose total number exceeded 330,000 (Chapter 10), could increase that population significantly; sentiment against Palestine immigration was perceived as weakening the state, as evidenced by the grim musings of a Palestine envoy in late 1948, on the "inadequate" humanity of DPs:

> The camps now house just the remainder of *She'erit ha-pleyta* [The Surviving Remnant]. The pioneering human material, that with human, Zionist awareness, has already left the camps on its way to Palestine through a variety of routes, whether directly or through Cyprus. What has now remained is that stuff that is glued to the old soil, like the remains of a meal stuck to the bottom of a burnt pot, which must be scrubbed and removed. No attempt at convincing them can work: "The homeland is on fire!" "Could a son not rush to save his home from the fire?" These words reach their ears, but leave their hearts untouched.[10]

Secondly, reluctance to make *'aliyáh* weakened the Zionist

pressure to open the gates of Palestine for unlimited Jewish immigration. As the suffering of the DPs was used as a bargaining chip in the struggle against immigration quotas imposed by the British, who controlled Palestine until the state was established, a Jew immigrating to the West was one less suffering Jew knocking on Palestine's doors. The migration of Jews to places other than Palestine was thus discouraged, sometimes even blocked by force. Attempts to evacuate child survivors to England and France immediately after Liberation in 1945 were thus thwarted, on Ben-Gurion's explicit instructions (Chapter 4).

By contrast, migration to Palestine was highly encouraged, sometimes even achieved by coercion. The Zionists were able to force an agenda because they had a coherent plan, and they were organized. I describe these affairs and the rhetoric around them, and how the DP story is recounted as a Zionist victory, denying the fact that the immigration to Palestine was at times forced, not voluntary (Chapters 8-9).

Thus, while the establishment of the state was predicated on a conflict with the Arabs over territory, it also had the potential—as we shall see—for a conflict with the Jews over people. Much has been written on the former, but less on the latter. This book is an attempt to fill this gap by focusing a critical lens on the pre-state Zionist movement. As I was writing it, I tried to give a voice to simple, ordinary Jews, whose suffering as they were ground by the mills of big ideas is rarely discussed. I sought to emphasize the fate of regular individuals, whose life stories form a rich web of alternative Jewish paths. I considered stories I heard in my native Israel, but also those of Bono Wiener, an Auschwitz survivor and pre-war Bund member in Łodz, who to his death headed the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Melbourne, Australia; of Chava Rosenfarb, who traveled from Łodz to Montreal via Bergen-Belsen; of *Beitar* member and Holocaust survivor Adv. Mark Verstandig of Hawthorne, Australia, and his friend, ex-Bund member, journalist Moshé Ajzenbud; of Jakob Celnik, a Warsaw born concentration camp

survivor, whose fate remains unknown from the moment he was fired from his post as art teacher in the public school of Camp Nei-Freimann, after he refused to mobilize to the IDF, and of many others, ordinary Jews, who went East and West in search of a better future without abandoning their Jewish identity. This book is, in a way, a tribute to the choices these brave people made.

Acknowledgments

I wrote this book twice: First in Hebrew for readers in Israel (where it was published in 1998); then, using a skeletal translation into English, I revised it extensively for an English-speaking readership. In both instances, I was helped by many friends: Shabtai Beyt-Tzvi's courageous book *Post-Ugandan Zionism on Trial* was the first event that led me to the recognition that it is possible to examine the history of the Holocaust critically; despite his being a non-academic historian, Beyt-Tzvi's book has had a lasting influence on the way the Holocaust is studied in Israel. His book also demonstrated how this period exposes conflicts between varieties of Jewish nationalism. Conversations I had with the late Beyt-Tzvi prior to his death in 1994 only reinforced my feeling that the route he pointed to could lead to new ideas about contemporary Jewish history, and is therefore worth exploring.[11]

Later, I heard from Eliyahu Binyamini and Noam Chomsky about the plight of non-Zionist survivors in the DP camps in Germany. The late Binyamini (author of *Medinot la-Yehudim*), was kind enough to provide the first documents. From there, the path was rather short: Dr. Binyomin Nadel, Secretary of the Bund International Coordinating Committee in New York, directed me to the Bund Archive at the YIVO Institute in New York, where archivist Leo Grinbaum gave me the first document from the camps—a mobilization order to the IDF, type-written in Yiddish and handed to DP Elster Yitzhak, resident of Camp

Styer, Austria, in May 1948. Dr. Nadel then put me in contact with Yiddish author and journalist Moshé Ajzenbud in Melbourne, Australia. Mr. Ajzenbud, himself an ex-DP who lived in the camps (mostly in Bad-Reichenhal) for six years, generously shared with me the collection of articles he wrote for the Bundist press in France and the United States during those years, which he mostly penned under a pseudonym for fear of *shikanes* (harassment). Yiddish author and journalist Yitzhak Luden of Giv'atayim, Israel, helped in introducing me to the late Bono Wiener (Melbourne) and to writer Chava Rosenfarb (Montreal). It was through these Holocaust survivors that I became acquainted with alternative Jewish fates. Sadly, not all of them will be able to read this book.

As I began my work in the archives, I was fortunate to be helped by many: Leo Greenbaum and Marek Webb of YIVO, New York; Chava Mustigman of the (now defunct) *Ha'apaláh* Archive at Tel Aviv University; Bracha Eshel, then of the *Avodah* (Labor) Archive, Tel Aviv; Batya Leshem of the Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem; workers of the *Haganáh* Archive, Tel Aviv and of the Israel State Archive, Jerusalem, and Doron Aviad of the Israel Defense Force Archive, Giv'atayim. Leo Greenbaum deserves a special mention, as he was exceptionally generous with his time and knowledge, and his help prevented, I hope, many errors and misunderstandings. My research assistants, Hamutal Friedmann and Michal Ben Shachar, were most helpful, as were my friends Ronny Talmor, Anat Saragusti and Yitzhak Haberfeld, who read the complete Hebrew manuscript and commented on it extensively.

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1 The War is Over

You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing.

He (from the opening of *Hiroshima mon amour*
Marguerite Duras/Alain Resnais, 1958)[1]

Chaotic Changes

May 1945 dawned on a new Europe. On the 8th of the month, Germany surrendered. Millions faced a reality full of unknown possibilities and dangers: Conquered and oppressed peoples were now released of their bonds, regaining their long denied freedom. The doomed, among them many Jews, were saved overnight; forced laborers could get up and go; fugitives emerged from hiding places in cellars and forests. The fate of many Germans, on the other hand, was suddenly reversed: Property owners were now homeless, sitting on piles of rubble, some of them about to be dispossessed of land and fortune; from almighty rulers, Nazis and their helpers turned captive or fugitive outlaws.

The victorious Allied armies were likewise undergoing dramatic changes. Combat units were turned into garrison troops overnight. Commanders who up to that moment were busy charging, flanking and crushing, suddenly found themselves confronting political problems, arguing at the negotiation table, all the while facing logistical problems and trying to manage an enormous civilian population, which meant turning their men from combat soldiers into policemen and quartermasters.[2]

In other parts of Europe, such changes had occurred earlier. The Allies' advance towards Germany and its gradual occupation and the rush to take the *Führerbunker* in its capital Berlin—from south, east, and west—started in mid-1944. The

countries of eastern, western and northern Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean basin were liberated one by one. May 1945 and Germany's total surrender only brought this process to its conclusion. Germany, and with it all of Europe, was now liberated territory. The war was over.

Roads were rapidly swarming with millions of people. Civilians, previously expelled from their homes, were now looking for ways to return. Prisoners who survived forced labor and death camps were searching for what remained of their families and possessions. Civilians who had fled bombed areas were making their way home, hoping to find it intact rather than in ruins. On the German side, defeated soldiers in tattered battle fatigues were trying to get home; Nazi officials now turned into fugitives, the fortunate among them vanishing, disguised and equipped with new identities. And throughout Europe, troops and supply convoys were frantically on the move. There were prisoners-of-war everywhere: The victorious armies took 7 million Germans captive, of whom 1.5 million were held in France and England; some were even shipped to the United States. Most were soon to be released, but many would be imprisoned for longer periods.[3]

Germany itself was not completely devastated. Hitler's last orders had been met with certain resistance, mainly on the part of Albert Speer who had undertaken measures to maintain the industrial infrastructure intact.[4] Still, the total collapse of government structures at all levels bore obvious results: No public services existed. The postal service was not functioning, telephone and telegraph lines were exclusively dedicated to military use, and there was no centralized management of the food supply.[5] Production had stopped almost completely, and Germany was in dire need of food and fuel from outside sources. Transportation of goods had to take place under nearly impossible circumstances as most roads and bridges were at least partially destroyed, and the waterways, especially the Rhine River, were choked with the remains of ships.

Amidst this chaos and destruction roamed millions of soldiers. The United States expeditionary force alone numbered three million men at the time of Germany's surrender, most of them physically present in Germany itself. The majority of soldiers were to be shipped to the Pacific Theater right away, where war with Japan was not yet over (two million soldiers were reassigned there by November 1945). And there were British, Russian and French troops as well, along with various expeditionary forces who had helped them during the War. These multitudes of human beings had to be housed, managed and fed. Germany was full of strangers, in numbers greater than it had ever seen.

The Potsdam Declaration and the Struggle Between the Powers

Politicians did not enjoy a calm stretch upon surrender. Tensions between East and West were already lurking, and each bloc was trying to gain capital and spheres of influence at its rival's expense. Earlier agreements divided Germany into four control zones, one for each of the Allies. Now, subsequent to Germany's unconditional surrender, the Supreme Commanders of all four partner-forces convened—General Eisenhower (United States), Field Marshall Montgomery (Britain), Marshall Zhukov (USSR), and General De Lattre de Tassigny (France): At a fraught meeting on June 5th, the Allied Control Council (ACC) for the occupied area was created. The generals also opened negotiations, to determine the nature of the relations between the various occupation zones. They also divided Berlin among the Allies, and founded the Allied *Kommandatura* (AK), for joint administration of the city. The Cold War had begun.[6]

Leaders of the world powers (i.e. Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill) had in fact already sown the seeds of the Cold War earlier, at the Yalta Conference in February, which had been the sequel to previous summit meetings in Moscow and in Tehran. A new world order was now being established, one that would

eventually define the division into Eastern and Western blocs for the next fifty years. As for Germany, it was clear that she must not be capable of embarking on any future acts of aggression. This, the three leaders believed, could be achieved through demilitarization, de-Nazification and democratization. The powers were thus facing three questions: The first regarded the future borders of Germany. It was agreed that Hitler's annexations (Austria, Sudetenland) were now all null and void, and that Poland would be compensated with lands in eastern Germany for the territories it had lost to the Soviet Union. The second question was the future partition of Germany; a tri-partite division was enacted, into British, American and Soviet occupation zones (France was also to get its share, as long as it was strictly at the expense of the West). Berlin, the (former) capital, was accorded a unique status. Special arrangements were made, and joint control was agreed upon. This decision, too, would create problems and place Berlin at the heart of the post-war East-West conflict.

The third question was economic. The accords hinted at a financial settlement, as they contained suggestions regarding reparations that the German people were to grant the victors, much in the spirit of the Versailles Treaty after World War I.[7] Each of these hints would later become a serious bone of contention.

Such was the situation as the War ended. Yet major problems still persisted, as was quickly realized by commanders on the ground, who began to try and reshape German reality right after Liberation. Berlin was perhaps the most severe of these, as no explicit agreement regarding it had been fully worked out in advance. It was, therefore, an expected minefield. The *Kommandatura* convened in early June, in order to determine authority and areas of responsibility. The Supreme Commanders did not come to the meeting themselves, but rather, sent deputies to the joint council; these were the US Army General Lucius D. Clay who was destined to play a central role in reshaping

Germany in years to come, the British General Robertson, and General Vassily Sokolovskiy of the Red Army (France, the fourth partner, had only a minor role in this affair, thus no representative was dispatched). The three men met to discuss the future management of Berlin. Differences of opinion were great, stemming from different perspectives due to the economic gap between East and West, from traditional suspicions, and from general conflicting interests. These ever-growing differences were a source of tension between the Powers during the initial post-war years not only in Germany, but also at the global level, as they fed the flames of the Cold War throughout the second half of the century. Moreover, the East-West gap played a central role in shaping immigration patterns from East to West in subsequent years. Difference of opinion would also bring about the closure of the central refugee organization of the time—United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA)—and would cast a big shadow over the lives of Jewish Displaced Persons residing in the camps, as well as outside.

The disagreements that emerged in the meetings of the commanders and their deputies after Liberation led to yet another summit conference. World leaders, each with his entourage, convened in Potsdam on July 16th for a lengthy two-week conference that was concluded with the signing of an agreement, a direct sequel to the Yalta accords. Participant leaders at this meeting were mostly veterans: Stalin, Truman (who, during the actual conference, took the decision to drop the A-bomb on Hiroshima) and Churchill. For the latter, this was a final chord of sorts: His party had just been defeated by Labour in the general election, and Clement Attlee went into office at the time of the conference.[8]

Although the Potsdam summit was a three-way affair, it clearly had two sides—East and West. Even prior to the conference, American planners (with the British in tow) were apparently arguing among themselves about the nature of the policy they should be adopting towards Germany. One group, com-

prised mainly of American Jews, hoped to perpetuate Germany's industrial degeneration, and opposed full rehabilitation. This group revolved around the Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, and included businessman Bernard Baruch, who proposed a plan limiting trade with Germany and the closure of Germany's heavy industry (to ensure the stoppage of weapons production). But this group did not have its way, and had to give in to those who favored rehabilitation. Morgenthau actually resigned after his policy recommendations were rejected, leaving negotiations in the hands of Secretary of State James Byrnes, his aide James McCloy, Minister of War Henry Stimson and Ambassador Averill Harriman. They, too, had a plan: They wanted the Allied Control Council to act as a surrogate German government, to revive the industry (including the heavy industry of the Ruhr Valley that would be rebuilt under dire constraints to ensure the neutralization of military infrastructure), and to democratize its political system and enforce de-Nazification.

The Soviets, led by Stalin, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and General Sokolovskiy, were aiming for economic gains at Germany's expense. They demanded the destruction of major sections of the heavy industry while seeking to maintain others, so that $20 billion worth of German goods would go to the victors as reparation for war damages. The Soviets also suggested that the industrial Ruhr region be expropriated and turned into an international zone owned by all the Allies, although it was originally assigned to the British occupation zone. This Russian-style punishment met with objections from both the Americans and the British. The latter still remembered the destabilization that the reparations accorded in the Treaty of Versailles inflicted on Europe less than three decades earlier. Repeating this mistake, said Churchill, would result in a Britain that was chained to a corpse.[9]

The reparations issue, then, was the hub of debate at Potsdam. Opening positions were far apart, and when the rival-

ry and suspicions among the Powers are considered, it is not difficult to see that the conference was stormy and tense, and to understand why its duration was so unusually extended.

An agreement was finally signed on August 2nd 1945, forming a blueprint to relations between the Powers in the coming years, as well as between them and Germany. With regard to the central question—territory, a compromise was reached: The Soviets would control the eastern part of Germany, relinquishing the Ruhr valley to the West. Disagreements about the future of the heavy industries, as well as on the reparations issue, led to vaguely formulated resolutions. The victors were thus once again able to declare that they had no intention to enslave or exploit the German people, but rather to help them rebuild their country. The agreement also asserted the Allies' commitment to the well-being of the German population as well as the vast numbers of refugees that were now in the country, as it committed the Allies "to assure the production and maintenance of goods and services required to meet the needs of the occupying forces and displaced persons in Germany, and essential to maintain in Germany average living standards not exceeding the average of the standards of living of European countries."[10]

Coordination among the Allies was also discussed. The Potsdam Declaration preserved the structure and functions of the Allied Control Council by reaffirming the total governing authority of the Supreme Commanders for all four occupation zones; it stipulated a total disarmament of Germany, and prohibited the production of arms. The agreement instituted de-Nazification: The elimination of the Nazi party, the abolition of all Nazi laws, the imprisonment of Nazi leaders, who were to stand trial along with other war criminals (specific reference was made to discussions held in London at that time, about the establishment of an international war-crimes tribunal), the removal of Nazi party members from key public and private positions, and the outlawing of all Nazi events. The agreement furthermore outlined a reorganization of the German education-

al and judicial systems, and encouraged the establishment of democratic parties and the establishment of local and regional government institutions, while subordinating all central government agencies to Allied supervision. At the same time, it sought to ensure the development of trade unions, and promoted the freedom of speech and of the press. Finally, the agreement authorized the expulsion of *Volksdeutsche* (ethnic Germans) from territories in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, and their resettlement in Germany. Some 12 million people would be subsequently uprooted, forced to create a new life for themselves in a devastated Germany.[11]

The Potsdam agreement also contained a number of commitments to Germany's economic future. However, it soon became obvious that politicians' commitments in this matter were purely theoretical. In fact, no side managed to meet even the most basic daily needs of the civilian population. Extreme destruction and devastation, and a complete lack of governmental infrastructure, made a hungry and desperate population roam the ruined cities in search of food. True, the Allies took it upon themselves to supply the population with basic foodstuffs and goods, each in its zone of occupation, but at first they were overwhelmed by the severe shortages of virtually everything, and were unable to provide even a necessary minimum. A ravished Berlin, "present day's Sodom", as one visitor called it,[12] posed almost insurmountable problems for those in control. "Wherever we looked we saw desolation," General Clay would later reminisce. "The streets were piled high with debris, which left in many places only a narrow one-way passage between high mounds of rubble, and frequent detours had to be made where bridges and viaducts were destroyed. Apparently, the Germans along the routes, which were lined with Soviet soldiers, had been ordered to remain indoors, and it was only at the intersections that a few could be seen on the streets which crossed our route. They seemed weak, cowed, and furtive and not yet recovered from the shock caused by the battle for Berlin.

It was like a city of the dead. I had seen nothing quite comparable in western Germany, and I must confess that my exultation in victory was diminished as I witnessed this degradation of man. I decided then and there never to forget that we were responsible for the government of human beings."[13]

The Allies were supposed to assume responsibility for the day-to-day welfare of Berliners. Yet, political tension among the Powers, and the economic differences between East and West, soon brought serious conflicts to the surface. The Soviets were unable, perhaps even unwilling, to supply the necessary quantities of food and fuel. Inhabitants were not even getting two-thirds of the meager 1,240 calorie ration officially allocated to them. The shortage in raw materials, basic goods and foodstuffs in the Soviet zone of occupation was particularly severe, and moving them around with the antiquated means of transportation the Soviets had at their disposal was rather difficult: Horse-drawn trains, observed General Clay, reminded an American spectator of the Civil War in the mid-19th century. Everything was now overshadowed by East-West rivalry (which would escalate, reaching a peak with the Soviet blockade of Berlin in 1948, and the airlifts that broke it). The economic situation in a devastated Germany—all the more so in Berlin—hit rock bottom.

The Misery of Millions: Refugees and Displaced Persons

If residents were in a sorry state, refugees on the roads from east to west were in far worse condition. Scenes on the main roads as this massive movement took place are hard to describe, says General Clay. Transportation did not even come close to meeting demand, and the roads were teeming with destitute people desperately seeking food and shelter. Every path and road swarmed with refugees on trucks, carts, riding cattle-back, and mostly on foot. No agreement regarding these refugees existed as of yet. Contingency plans were in the mak-

ing, but their successful implementation would take time.

Mass movement of civilians was forced by multiple factors. Malcolm Proudfoot, a senior official in the Department of Displaced Persons of the Allied High Command at the time (who later wrote the most comprehensive review of refugees in Europe in the 20th century), names a few: Escape from political and religious persecution; enforced population transfer; escape or evacuation as a result of military action; expulsion for extermination purposes; exile for the purpose of forced labor; resettlement; and finally, escape for fear of resumed persecution and extermination.[14]

In such a state of chaos it is, of course, difficult to determine numbers in any precision, or even make half-accurate guesses. Still, an understanding of the demographic picture—partial as it may be—is of utmost importance. Some estimate the number of refugees in 1945 Europe at 30 million in total, and of these, 5-10 million in Germany alone.[15] A comparison of sources points to lower estimates (some 10 million refugees in Europe, 6 million of which in Germany alone).[16] But even the "lower" figures are astounding. Most of the refugees returned home by the end of that year. With time, then, this intense traffic waned. US Army estimates indicate that by the end of September 1945, there were 3.2 million refugees in the American Zone in Germany; the actual numbers were perhaps even slightly lower.[17] By the spring of 1946, the number of refugees was significantly reduced, slightly exceeding one million,[18] of which the greater numbers were concentrated in the American Zone, and the lesser in the British and French. Predictably, data regarding the Soviet Zone are lacking, but it is known that many refugees there were returned to their homelands by force. These were of many nationalities: Around a million Poles, more than 100,000 Baltic nationals, Hungarians and Yugoslavs, as well as many thousands of Italians, Greeks, Czechs, Slovaks, Bulgarians and Romanians.[19]

On top of all these, there were the Jewish survivors of the camps. On Liberation day, some 180,000 people were freed from

camps in Germany itself. During the first weeks after Liberation, many of them died of infectious diseases, exhaustion, malnutrition and intestinal complications resulting from sudden overeating. For these many thousands, liberation had come too late. The summer of 1945, then, encountered less than one hundred thousand survivors in Germany, just liberated from camps, and of these, several dozen thousand were Jews.[20]

Most of these figures are, naturally, mere rough estimates based only in part on orderly reports, not all of which were filed subsequent to an actual count.[21] The exact number of refugees in Europe at the time of Liberation may never be known. Yet, carefully looking at the sheer scale of the phenomenon is important, in order to get an idea of the chaos then reigning in Europe: The First World War had produced a gigantic refugee crisis, yet the number moving about at the end of World War II was ten times larger. Proudfoot notes that the development of sophisticated machine-guns, of poison gas, armored personnel carriers and tanks, planes, telephone and wireless communications, and other technological advances, is what helped rulers to exercise their will on large populations—to conquer, exploit, expel or exterminate.[22]

The refugees at the time of Liberation were not all in the same state: Some emerged from hiding places, some were partisans in the forests, others had been exiled, and some lucky ones had managed to escape. Generally, most of them could pick up and go home, or try to start anew elsewhere. But there were those who simply remained where they were: Exhausted survivors of the death camps, numb with apathy, liberated from concentration and labor camps, veterans of the death marches, and those who simply had nowhere to go. These stayed put, and were eventually granted the dubious status of refugees or Displaced Persons (DPs), a new entity invented especially for them, a status that provided certain rights both with the military authorities and the various relief and rehabilitation organizations.

These refugees were yet another quantity added to the already enormous number of refugees that Europe had been

accumulating. The advancement of the Allied forces towards Germany brought them in contact with refugees who had escaped from their homes, forced laborers who had been freed, prisoners, and civilians of various countries who found themselves far from home. By January 1945, the Allies, who had been preparing ahead of time for encounters with different populations, were already burdened with 247,000 refugees, whom they were feeding and housing in some one hundred assembly centers and camps in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland. Some of these foreigners were civilians who had been stranded in between the warring camps and fled into forests, ravines and caves to escape the crossfire; others were liberated from concentration and death camps. There were also foreign laborers, present in Germany of their own choice, in addition to the many who had been brought there by force. As for these, the Allies attempted (sometimes successfully) to use them as collaborators in enemy territory—the Allies requested their help: In September 1944, General Eisenhower's headquarters began to issue them instructions—to escape and hide, stop working and obstruct the movement of trains. Some cooperated, helping to speed up the end of the war; then, tragically, they became refugees themselves.[23]

In this general tumult, amongst the homeless multitudes, international organizations—established in good time to deal with refugees—were engrossed with formal questions concerning the status of refugees. These organizations, the result of long-term Allied planning, were intended to manage the welfare, repatriation and resettlement of all refugees and DPs in the liberated territories. At the time of Liberation, contingency plans were aired and the organizing began. By the end of 1944, the Allied Control Council had set up the Displaced Persons Executive (DPX), officially defined the DP status, and characterized the working relations that would exist between the ACC and the various voluntary relief and rehabilitation organizations (UNRRA—the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation

Agency, IGCR—the Inter Governmental Committee on Refugees, etc.) which will be discussed later. The basic idea (that didn't necessarily work) was that combat units would be relieved by garrison officers and US Army troops especially trained for this task, at the earliest time possible.[24] These relief units would then be in charge of operations to control and coordinate rehabilitation, welfare and repatriation.

To achieve all these goals, several distinctions in status needed to be made: Between refugees (pre-World War II) vs. DPs (forced out of their homes as a result of World War II actions); between those entitled to care vs. those who were not; between those for whom repatriation was obligatory vs. those for whom it was impracticable ("non-repatriables"). Such stipulations of status were a must, in order to establish clearly who was entitled to care and aid and who was not; who would be allowed to stay put, and who would be repatriated. The international organizations sought to reach a universally agreed-upon definition of the terms 'refugee' and 'displaced person'. Since World War II refugees were not the only ones in Europe, and certainly not in the world, words were minced, so as not to offend any side, East or West. It was also necessary to define those individuals entitled to aid from rehabilitation organizations, and set them apart from those who were not. The constitution of the International Refugee Organization (IRO)—a central player in the story that follows—provides the most comprehensive set of definitions:[25]

1. Refugees are all individuals who have left, or are currently residing, away from their country of permanent residence, having been victims of the Nazi and fascist regimes, or of regimes who collaborated with or aided them, in their war against the Allies.[26]
2. Refugees are also individuals located outside their country of permanent residence and who, as a result of World War II, are unable or unwilling to place themselves under the protection of the government of their own country.

Grounds for such an inability would be fear of persecution, prejudice, family reasons and others.

3. Refugees are Jews, people without civic status, aliens, victims of the Nazis who had been German or Austrian residents, who had been imprisoned or forced to flee, and who had not yet been resettled.
4. The term 'refugee' also applies to children (age 16 and under), who are unaccompanied by an adult, whether orphans or such whose parents are absent, and who are located outside their homeland. These individuals rank at the top priority for receiving care and aid.

The constitution also distinguished between refugees not necessarily located outside their homeland, and Displaced Persons—those "forced to abandon their homeland or their previous country of permanent residence" following actions of the Nazi regime and its satellites: Forced laborers, or exiles on racial, religious or political grounds. The novelty in this definition was that, unlike in the past, refugee status could now be granted to people who did have a citizenship of some sort.[27]

It was decided that refugees, as well as Displaced Persons, would be repatriated with the aid of the various relief organizations (UNNRA, IRO), except the Jews, Spanish republicans (until Franco's regime would be replaced by a democratic government), and all those barred from returning home. The Allies acknowledged various reasons that prevented many from returning home, and accordingly, made arrangements for them to make a fresh start elsewhere.[28]

At this stage, some order had to be effected among the multitudes of refugees who either remained in Germany, or were to enter it—somebody had to classify them, make records, move them around, and provide them clothing, food, and housing. This, as we have seen, turned out to be a formidable task: By the end of the summer of 1945, the refugee population of Germany was quite varied, consisting of Jews, Ukrainians, *Volksdeutsche* ("ethnic Germans") of various origins, Lithuanians (100,000),

Latvians (60,000) and Estonians (30,000), and even 7,000 Chechens. The numbers were still huge, even if smaller than at Liberation, and subject to constant change (as influx and outflow of refugees were continuous). Upon examination of the figures in the post-war years (becoming more reliable with time and as the government became more stable), a fairly clear immigration pattern emerges, which will be discussed further on. The dramatic and swift population changes of the beginning gave way to relative stabilization (until mid-1946), followed by a phase of considerable increase in the number of refugees, and then by a final decline. Below, the focus will be on the problem of Jewish refugees: Our story will be about Jews who wandered in and out of Germany (especially in 1946-1948), desperately trying to regroup. The number of such wanderers, as we shall see, was very large. It is of interest, though, that—unlike some of its successors (especially the one in the Middle East)—the refugee problem created by the momentous post-war population movement in Europe would be solved almost entirely within a short six years.[29]

2 Refugees in Conquered Territory

Kh'hob yorn givalgert	For years I've wandered
In der fremd	In foreign lands
Itst for ikh zikh valgern in der heym	Now I'm to wander my own home
Mit eyn por shikh eyn hemd oyfn leyb	My feet are shod, a shirt on my back
In der hant dem shtekn	A cane in my hand,
Vi ken ikh zayn on dem?	How could I be without?

Itzik Manger (*Lid un balade fun itsik manger*, 1976)[1]

Jews in Post-War Europe

Only a scant few of the 3,153,000 Jews in 1945 Europe had not personally experienced the horrors of the war and the Holocaust.[2] The morbidity, misery and poverty of survivors motivated action on the part of many relief organizations. Like many other groups, the Zionists from Palestine came to help surviving European Jews to relieve themselves of their misery. To see how these actions developed from rescue efforts to a national agenda we must start at the very beginning, that is, at Liberation.

The remaining European Jews now were mostly refugees who had managed to flee in good time to the eastern parts of the Soviet Union and were saved (although they too suffered poverty and hunger). Most post-war European Jews, then, were survivors. A slim minority were still in their homes when the the fighting stopped; survivors had turned into exiles, and now many were on the move, *en route* to their places of origin, hoping that their homes and lives could be rebuilt. Survivors belonging to the Jewish communities of Western Europe and the Balkans were

more likely to reclaim life more or less as it had been. Our story centers around the less fortunate—wandering Jews who no longer had a home they could go to, those anxious to leave Europe, as to them continental soil meant concentration and death camps, from which they had just been liberated, These Jews have become known in Zionist lore as *She'erit ha-pleyta*—the Surviving Remnant, and it is on them that our story will focus.[3]

Returning to Poland and Lithuania

For surviving Jews of Eastern European, Liberation came at various times. The advancing Red Army took Lithuania, as well as parts of Poland, as early as 1944. Liberation day found minute numbers of Jews in these areas, previously occupied by the Nazis. In July 1944, a mere few hundred were still alive in the three Baltic Republics—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. However, the Jewish population there would grow in coming months, as thousands were returning from the East while others emerged from their hiding places, whether forests, barns, or cellars.[4] Poland itself was liberated step by step: It took the Allies six months to conquer all of it—from July 1944, when the Red Army crossed the Bóg River, (Poland's eastern border), until January 1945, when its occupation was complete. As the advancing armies met, Poland was virtually *Judenrein* (famously dramatic individual cases notwithstanding). The abandoned death camps in Poland also contained a scant few residents, since the retreating Nazis had closed them down earlier, rushing the surviving prisoner population, on foot or by train, to forced labor camps in Germany and Austria.[5] Prisoners who had managed to live through the death camps, and who even completed the death march, would still meet their death in those labor camps just before Liberation. The empty death camps in Poland were captured one by one: Among the first was Majdanek, set in the east near Lublin (freed as early as July 14th, 1944). Auschwitz was taken by the Red Army on January 27th, 1945.

Polish Jews who had fled eastward and were thereby saved, were now moving back, following the troops, ready to go back home. Thus from near zero in 1944, the Jewish population in Poland grew rapidly to around 55,000 in June 1945.[6]

Surviving refugees were trying to get back to their homes in search of family members from whom they had been torn, or to reclaim property they had abandoned upon expulsion or flight. Some organized themselves in groups, either for self-protection or for the purpose of making a plan for a future communal Jewish life. These groups tried to contact the forming Polish government, and founded a central coordinating committee, that represented all the Jewish political organizations—Zionist and non-Zionist, religious and secular—and organized welfare activities. The non-Zionists, led by pre-war members of the socialist Jewish Labor Bund party, began organizing politically and socially, with an intention to revive Jewish life in post-war Poland. Initially, they tried to shape social structure as it had been in the past: They renewed their ties with the Polish Socialist Party (PPS, which now had one of its members as Prime Minister), began publishing newspapers in Yiddish and Polish, and tried to revive *Zukunft*, the pre-war Bundist youth movement, as well as *Skif*, the Bundist children's society, in a format reminiscent of the past. The Zionists, by contrast, were busy with activities that pointed solely to Palestine; some had already started developing safe routes for moving south, *en route* to *Eretz Yisrael*. They were the founders of the *B'richáh* (Flight), an organization that would mobilize thousands of Jews through various routes to the southern European coast of the Mediterranean, where they would embark boats in an (often vain) attempt to reach Palestine.[7]

Displaced Jews

In Germany, Austria and northern Italy, the state of the Jews was quite different from Poland. The few dozen thousand liberated camp inmates had long been incarcerated; others—those fortunate few who had survived the death marches—had

arrived from Poland only months earlier. At the time of Liberation, April-May 1945, survivors were scattered in hundreds of larger and smaller camps. Best known are the larger ones such as Dachau (liberated April 29th), Bergen-Belsen (April 15th), Buchenwald (April 11th)[8], Mauthausen and Ebensee (liberated at the end of the war, on May 3rd and 5th, 1945, respectively), but there were many other auxiliary and satellite camps, that the Allies discovered and freed.[9] Most prisoners in German and Austrian camps simply stayed there. Emaciated, weak and devoid of energy, they loitered there, out of pure inertia and lack of purpose. Some began the journey to what used to be home.

The newly acquired freedom did not really improve the lot of these miserable human beings. In some instances, the situation actually became worse. This was the case of Bergen-Belsen. The British, who stormed the camp and liberated it on April 15th, left within hours, to continue their pursuit of fleeing German troops. Left to their own devices, Hungarian SS collaborators continued to rule the camp for another three days. Liberated inmates could not escape the wrath of the defeated, whose murderous actions resulted in another eighty-three dead prisoners, among them seventy-two Jewish victims.[10]

Many who had lived to see the thrilling moments of Liberation were still bound to die soon, being in no physical condition to survive. For them, the liberators arrived too late. Bergen-Belsen contained 50,000 prisoners at Liberation, "a dense mass of apathetic, emaciated scarecrows crammed into wooden shacks, in many cases without beds or blankets, sometimes even without clothes," wrote Dr. W.R.P. Collis (a British army physician attached to the liberating force).[11] Of those more dead than alive humans, some 30,000[12] would die in the first months subsequent to Liberation. Conditions in Bergen-Belsen were appalling: 600-1000 people huddled in halls designed to house eighty; live and dead bodies were heaped together, and the whole camp was full of stacked-up bodies, the topic of famous

photographs that would be published all over the Western press and shock the world. The bodies in these startling pictures are not those of prisoners who had been murdered by the Nazis, but rather, belonging to those still dying *en masse* at the time of Liberation or directly afterwards.

The vast majority of survivors were ill. Some lucky ones were transferred to hospitals abroad, aided by the Swedish Red Cross. One of its directors, Count Folke Bernadotte who, during the war had been involved in the rescue of thousands of Jews, (and was later assassinated by right wing Jewish zealots while on a UN mission in Palestine), initiated the transfer of 6,000 ailing survivors from Bergen-Belsen to Sweden.[13] The British government also tried to save as many dying prisoners as it could, as its crews were desperately trying to feed the starved survivors. This turned out to be a difficult task. The deep malnutrition many former inmates were suffering had dire consequences to their digestive system, whose functioning was less than poor. In an effort to save the lives of as many of these as they could, the authorities brought 200 medical students from Belgium and Britain, just for intravenous feeding of sick survivors.[14] Malnutrition, however, was not the only major problem that plagued the ex-inmate population. Infectious diseases were rampant in the camp, and it was quickly becoming a public health hazard. The British soon burnt it down for this reason, and transferred its occupants to Camp Hohne nearby, which residents continued to call by the former name. As winter drew near, 16,000 residents remained in Bergen-Belsen, of whom 11,000 were Jews.[15]

In Mauthausen, which held 70,000 prisoners when it was taken, thousands would not survive. Liberators found seven hundred dead bodies as they entered the camp, piled up by those prisoners who still had enough strength to lift anything.[16] Mortality rates in the first weeks after Liberation remained exceedingly high—around 20 percent of the surviving population did not make it to the summer.[17] Conditions were utterly deplorable: There was no water pressure in the pipes; thousands

were sleeping on the ground; the lucky ones, who successfully secured a spot on the three-rung bunk beds, were also crowded, five or six of them sleeping in every level. In other camps things were in no happier state. Prisoners who had just been liberated—sometimes walking skeletons—were wallowing in the exact same filth as before, and although authorities provided food, it was far from sufficient.

Healthier and stronger survivors (especially in the American Zone) were trying to settle in abandoned POW camps that the Nazis had built, in deserted army barracks and in former Nazi estates. Many did so with considerable success. Later, refugees would be housed in residential buildings whose German tenants had been forcibly evicted. A lucky few managed to take over empty apartments in German cities. But many simply stayed in the concentration camps, now converted into large camps for that newly invented entity—Displaced Persons.

A host of relief activities was now aimed at the masses of miserable, starved and beaten people. Rehabilitation organizations initially treated refugees in Germany in the same way refugees in other Allied occupation zones had been cared for: Survivors were put in Assembly Centers, and handled by professional staff, specially trained for rehabilitation in the United States and Britain. These Centers were spread over a large area, mainly in the south, that is, in the American Zone of Germany, Austria and Italy, but there were also some in the British Zone in the northwest. These places were soon to become the first DP camps, locus of many dramatic events that would follow.

One of the largest camps was Landsberg, which first housed both Jewish and non-Jewish liberated prisoners. Located near Munich, it was commandeered by Area Commander Major Irving Heymont, a Jewish-American commander of an infantry battalion, who from a field commander suddenly found himself turned into Area Governor. The letters he wrote to his wife contain vivid descriptions of shocking scenes. Here is how he described his first tour of camp Landsberg:[18]

> The major problem is the DP camp. Here, in the town (Landsberg), there is a camp with about 6,000 men, women, and children. Of these, about 5,000 are Jews, and the remainder assorted—mostly Hungarians and various kinds of Baltics. They occupy a former *Wehrmacht Kaserne* and some wooden barracks at the edge of town. The people of the camp are mostly from concentration camps, particularly Dachau and its sub-camps that were in this vicinity.
>
> The camp is filthy beyond description. Sanitation is virtually unknown. Words fail me when I try to think of an adequate description. The camp is run by an UNRRA team and a few representatives of the American Joint Distribution Committee—the Jewish philanthropic organization from the United States. These people have been working against great obstacles [...] with a few exceptions, the people of the camp themselves appear demoralized beyond hope of rehabilitation. They appear to be beaten both spiritually and physically, with no hopes or incentives for the future. Most of the leaders among the Jews seem to have been killed off by the Nazis. There are a few courageous ones left who have organized a camp committee to try and do something.

A new, grim, reality was thus shaping itself—the refugee universe of DP camps was being created, one in which people of many different nationalities, young and old, native speakers of a mixed bag of languages, were suddenly thrown together. The majority of these places were in Bavaria, in the American occupation Zone, especially around Munich. Other prominent DP centers were established near Stuttgart, Regensburg and Frankfurt. In the British Zone, almost all DPs were in Camp Bergen-Belsen. More DPs were in the American Zone in Austria and Italy (some 200,000 in Austria, 75,000 in Italy),[19] and so, DP camps were set up for them in a format quite similar to Germany. Exact demographics are not easily reconstructed (regarding the Soviet controlled areas, hardly any data are available).

Particularly hard to determine is the number of survivors in Bavaria in summer 1945. This is in part due to the movement of huge populations at the time, and to mortality rates that were extremely high.[20] Estimates regarding the number of Jews—our focus from this point on—range from 27,000 to 50,000 Jews in southern Germany and western Austria in June 1945.[21]

Dreadful Conditions in the Camps

The DPs lived in crowded and filthy quarters, fenced in with barbed wire set up by armies whose combat soldiers were now becoming camp managers. Army commanders were not surprised by this transformation that the times dictated—the possibility that a fighting army would have to take care of large civilian populations did not escape early planners. Already in 1944, schools for military government—teaching European languages and methods of government—were established in the United States, a plan for an infrastructure of German civic government was laid out, and teams of expert governors were prepared, ready to move with the occupying forces and stay behind with the population while the troops were advancing.[22] Now all these forces snapped into action. A Displaced Persons Executive (DPX) was founded by the Allied Supreme Command, and its first move was to classify the refugees by destination: It distinguished between those who wanted to return to their previous homes, and those who did not, or were unable to do so. As for the Jews, the American Military Government sought to place them under the supervision of representatives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, yet months would go by before this would happen.[23]

At first, camp survivors were facing extreme hardships, not just because of the appalling conditions, but also as some of the American soldiers were treating them condescendingly, viewing them as "sub-human creatures." The dreadful living conditions only enhanced the state of apathy many of the sur-

vivors were in, a state that Major Heymont encountered immediately at the beginning of his tour of the Landsberg Camp of which he was put in charge. It was, so he learned, turned into a home for over 6,000 DPs—after the American military authorities had declared the facility unfit to hold POWs.[24]

> The DPs sleep in bunks of rough, unfinished lumber that are often double and even triple decked. Mattresses are straw-filled sacks. Bedding consists of shoddy gray Wehrmacht blankets or US Army blankets. Sheets seem to be unknown except in the camp hospital and among a few enterprising persons who must have black market resources. The people are provided with tall, narrow, wooden wall lockers. In these lockers (or occasionally in a wooden box, a battered suitcase or a rucksack), they keep their worldly possessions, food supply, and utensils [...]
>
> The toilets beg description. About half the bowls were inoperative but full of excrement. Toilet seats, while not entirely lacking, were smeared with excrement or wet with urine. No toilet paper was in sight. I was informed that toilet attendants have been designated—but no one could be seen on duty. In explanation of the deplorable state of affairs, I was told that the water pressure was low because of war damage to the water mains [...]
>
> In the washrooms, most of the sinks were out of order. As we inspected, people came to wash dishes and pans, the remains of the food were just washed into the sinks. The utensils were dried with dirty rags or old paper and the paper often just dropped on the floor. The washrooms and toilets had an intense acrid odor that almost caused me to vomit.

Jewish DPs also had some special problems. First, malnutrition was worse for them. While they had all been previously in Nazi concentration camps and were forced to subsist on most minimal food rations, this was not necessarily true of other refugees. Secondly, Jews were assigned to camps that did not discriminate between them and others, and as a consequence, many

were forced to be in the undesirable company of their ex-jailers, torturers or of just plain Nazi collaborators who were now paradoxically turned into DPs, on the grounds that repatriation to the Soviet Union would put their lives in danger because of their past. Thirdly, the army treated DPs as subordinates, subjected them to military discipline, referred to the camps as "concentration camps," and fenced them off, placing guards at the gates. Leaving the camp was strictly subject to an authorization from the military commanders. Camp cleaning staff were working under armed guards, and any breach of discipline was punished with incarceration, and sometimes even denial of food. Remarkably, and despite the horrors that the Jewish DPs had experience in concentration and death camps, orders were specifically issued by the US Army, instructing commanders to give them no preferential treatment, and "avoid creating the impression that the Jews are to be singled out for special treatment, as such action will tend to perpetuate the distinction of Nazi racial ideology."[25] These orders were clearly well intentioned—meant to underscore the termination of all discriminatory actions against the Jews. The results, ironically, were sometimes unfortunate. In addition, anti-Semitic incidents, initiated by Allied soldiers and officers, also occurred. Most notable were the stories about General George S. Patton, the legendary commander of the Third Army that occupied southern Germany and a man not known for mincing words. Once Military Governor, Patton gave explicit orders to surround all the camps with barbed-wire fences. He treated DPs condescendingly in every encounter, and his anti-Semitic remarks quickly won him notoriety.[26]

Jewish relief agencies were not allowed to enter the camps at first, despite pressure that various welfare organizations were exerting on the military authorities.[27] The only Jews who could give special assistance were US Army rabbis—a small group of twenty-five rabbis wearing US Army uniforms, who tried their best under the circumstances. Conditions in the British Zone (where there were fewer DPs), were similarly terrible, as evi-

denced by the horrifying post-Liberation mortality rates in Bergen-Belsen we have seen (nearly 20 percent in the first few weeks). The state of Jewish DPs, then, was desperate.

It is difficult to determine with any certainty what kind of future these Jewish survivors were then wishing for themselves. From the early period, only a single survey exists, conducted in Dachau among 2,190 liberated Jewish prisoners at the beginning of May 1945. The vast majority (65 percent) indicated that they wished to return home. Some 15 percent (326 persons of those interviewed) declared a desire to immigrate to Palestine, whereas over 20 percent (491 respondents) wanted to reach the United States.[28] If this limited survey is any indication, then at the time, the desire to return home was the most prevalent.[29] For many, however, this wish would remain unattainable, their homes either no longer standing, or occupied by others. The more astute among the survivors were quick to grasp the situation; they took the most reasonable step they could take—they organized. The events surrounding this act of organizing, a rather dramatic process that happened simultaneously in multiple locations and at a remarkable speed, form an historical tale of great significance. Equally important is the story of Zionist involvement in the camps. The rapid formation of an efficient organizational infrastructure for a labile and heterogeneous population that was both confused and scattered, the quick establishment of thriving social institutions for the Jewish DPs, the creation of a broad consensus on values, goals and structure, and the high degree of discipline achieved among the members—are the most remarkable accomplishments of the organizers, who in a very short period of time brought about a change of heart in many of the Jewish DPs, and convinced them that Zionism was not simply the ideology of choice; it was, they argued, the *only* tenable one, and therefore Palestine was to become their focus and future goal. Careful attention must be paid to these actions: Understanding them will be a key step in the path toward the formation of a

coherent picture of events that would take place in the camps later, most particularly in three years' time, as the State of Israel was being established.

The Surviving Remnant Organizes

In early summer 1945, the majority of Jewish DPs were intermingled with other nationals and concentrated in two regions: Bavaria, held by the Americans, and around Bergen-Belsen, in the British Zone. DPs were initially gathered in Assembly Centers, as the military authorities initially called these institutions. These were set up wherever possible, whether in former Wehrmacht barracks and Nazi concentration camps, or in deserted factories and hotels, abandoned apartment buildings, stables, churches, hospitals, sanatoria, schools and just about any other public building that was available. These Centers differed widely in size, housing between fifty to seven thousand occupants.[30] Conditions were extremely harsh, as living quarters were cramped and the food meager. This dismal picture had, however, some bright patches here and there: Some among the Jews were making an attempt to organize, and reconnect to their long-lost world:

> *Shalom*, friends,
>
> Here, in Buchenwald, we are 1,700 Polish Jews, among us 500 young people, aged six to twenty years.
>
> It has been over a month since we were liberated by the American army, and during this time, citizens of various countries such as French, Dutch, Czech and other nationals have returned to their homelands.
>
> And now, the repatriation of Polish nationals is the issue at hand. This has thrown us, the Zionist Youth, into a very complicated situation. The fact that no Zionist institution—not even the Joint [Distribution Committee]—has reached us, nor has anyone given us any sign of life, has aroused the feeling in us that we are all alone in this world, having no one to take interest in our fate. A small gang of

> *Yevsek* [Soviet faithfuls] Jews are trying to take advantage of this situation and convince many that best will be to return to Poland. In their propaganda they tempt the Jews, saying that no country in the world would let in Polish Jews, and that our only choice is to either remain in the camp (in Germany) or return to Poland. As we have seen enough of camp life and none of us wish to waste but another moment here, unfortunately this leaves us only the choice of going back to Poland.
>
> We, Pioneer Zionist Youth, stand firm in our desire to show others only the way to the Labor Movement's *Eretz Yisrael*. Alas, we are very poor and need proof to convince the youth that the return to *Eretz Yisrael* is imminent. Only this can dampen their wish to return to Poland.
>
> Pioneer Youth Committee, Buchenwald[31]

This attempt was early, but not the first. At Camp Buchenwald, an International Committee of Liberated Prisoners was established at Liberation, on April 11th 1945, by the Communist underground that had been active in the camp already since 1942. The Jews had placed their representatives in this committee, but, as they were interested in forming an organizational structure of their own, they also established a Jewish self-help committee, and with the assistance of US Army rabbis, started a newspaper.[32] In block 88 at Bergen-Belsen, a modest gathering also took place three days after the camp was liberated, and a temporary prisoners' committee was elected. "Any prisoner at the camp who was able to move," recalled Yosef Rosensaft, who was elected to head the committee, "participated in the election to the committee, that began its work at once."[33] Elsewhere as well, there were some who understood the need to organize quickly. The handful of US Army rabbis who were stationed in the area recognized the gravity of the situations and joined hands to help organize the Jewish survivors. Rabbi Abraham Klausner, who arrived at Dachau with the troops, thus helped found the first Jewish hospital on liberated

German soil at the St. Otilien fortress near Munich, under the leadership of Dr. Zalman Grinberg, a survivor from Kovno, who was immediately appointed as the hospital's chief physician. Dr. Grinberg took up an initiative right away. He wrote a letter on behalf of Europe's Jewish survivors, appealing to the World Jewish Congress "as the highest authority on matters Jewish," and complained that no representative of any of the Jewish organizations had approached the survivors once their suffering was over, in an attempt to help, talk and listen. "This is a grave disappointment to us," he wrote. "We are presently preoccupied with two important questions. We all want to know who among our kin died and who survived. So we turn to you to obtain lists of Jewish survivors in Russia and the occupied zones of Germany. We want to know over whom we must say *Kaddish* (mourner's prayer). The second question is what will become of us? Where will we be taken, where will our miserable lives lead us?" He concluded: "In anticipation of immediate contact with you, and hoping for the traditional Jewish aid in times of need, I greet you with *Zionsgruß* (blessing of Zion)."[34]

Grinberg's friends, a group of Dachau survivors, and veterans of the Kovno ghetto, founded a Hebrew newspaper, *Nitzotz* (Spark), where issues pertaining to the future of the Jewish nation were debated. Rabbi Klausner also assisted in setting up an information bureau for the search of missing relatives, and supported a special convention on July 1st at Camp Feldafing, in which a self-proclaimed Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria was formed. The founders took immediate action. They filed a complaint with the Military Government's Nourishment Board, stressing the unique suffering of Jewish survivors:

> We apply to you in the matter of food. The Jewish political ex-prisoners at various D.P. camps in Bavaria get an insufficient ration of food, as most of the liberated from the *KZ* [concentration camp] till now perceive the consequences of underfeeding at hard work, a great number of

them was sick with typhus. This caused, that the Jewish ex-prisoners in the D.P. camps are hungry.

We beg to take care of the fact, that, while the Ukrainians, who were volunteers in the SS-armies, and the Poles, who worked in the Nazi-factories, were nourished like the German population, the Jewish prisoners get the least and worst nourishment. We beg to allot an additional ration of food for the Jewish political prisoners.

Secretary (Puczyc) Chairman (Dr. Grinberg)[35]

The committee also wrote to the Red Cross, requesting civilian clothing to replace the striped prisoner garb.[36] Dr. Grinberg and his friends also took concrete organizational initiative: With the help of Rabbi Klausner, they found a building in Munich to house the Committee central office. In the surrounding camps, they established camp-committees, each governing a string of departments: Education, culture, religion, clothing, nutrition, immigration and information. This was a remarkably rapid course of events, in which a regional committee was also established in Regensburg.

Among the Jews were those who chose not to organize, but rather to return to what used to be home. These were mostly Hungarian and Romanian nationals. Some Polish Jews, particularly members of the Jewish Labor Bund party, also wanted to go back home, to Poland, in line with their previous *do'ikayt* (here-ness) ideology, that called for the recognition that a *bona fide* Jewish national home is *do* (here), that is at any location where a large enough Jewish community exists. The Zionists, by contrast, were reluctant to accept the notion of Diaspora as home, certainly not a national home, and in Buchenwald they took a significant step: They founded a training *kibbutz* (*Hakhshara*), obtaining permission of the military authorities to take over a deserted agricultural farm, and train groups of survivors in agriculture, as a step towards their prospective immigration to Palestine.

More significant, perhaps, was the vision of those already aware of the need for organization on a broader scale. These were representatives of the *Yishuv*—the Jewish community in Palestine who soon began visiting the camps. While a group of mostly undercover *Mossad* agents had been wandering about in Europe for some time, engaged in *Ha'apaláh* (illegal immigration) activities, the first official Zionist visitors were an officer in the Jewish Brigade of the Royal British Army, Captain Aharon Khoter-Yishai, and Eliyahu Dobkin, head of the *'Aliyáh* (immigration) Department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine. They began touring the DP camps, seeking ways to mobilize the Jewish DPs to the struggle for the opening of the (then closed) gates to free Jewish immigration to Palestine, and for the (then unsuccessful) effort to establish a Jewish state there. While Dobkin arrived from Palestine, Khoter-Yishai had come with the British forces, reaching the southern part of Germany from the North of Italy, where the Jewish Brigade had been engaged in battle. A relatively prominent *Yishuv* figure, he had been instructed to take advantage of the freedom his position and rank granted him, and start locating prospective candidates for illegal immigration to Palestine. He began traveling around the DP camps with a small entourage, concealing the true purpose of his trip by telling the military authorities that he was on a mission to find missing relatives of his soldiers.[37] Thus he and his men spent the last ten days in June going from one DP camp to the next, visiting the Jews, and negotiating with the American and British military authorities over all issues, small and large. "We set three goals to ourselves," Khoter-Yishai wrote in a report compiled later, "a. to locate missing family members of our soldiers wherever possible [...]; b. to explore exit routes from Germany to Italy; c. to make the Jewish Brigade widely known to Jewish survivors, and to bring greetings from the *Yishuv* everywhere we go." He then made a significant comment. "In addition," he wrote, "we found ourselves engaged in a campaign over a political demand: To remove the Jews now scattered in

various camps, housed in blocks they were sharing with their [mostly Polish] co-nationals, and transfer them to special camps for Jews."[38] Judging from this report, this political objective had the highest priority in the mind of Khoter-Yishai and his friends, since hardly any meetings with survivors are mentioned, and the report focuses on negotiations the officers had with the military authorities. The encounter may not have been prominent in the minds of the Palestine soldiers, but to everyone else it was most moving. "*Yidn, di brigade iz gekumen!*" (Jews, the Brigade has arrived!)[39] roared camp residents in Yiddish, and jumped on the jeeps, hugging the bewildered soldiers, excitedly feeling the Star-of-David insignia on their uniforms with their fingers.[40]

The activities of Palestine envoys were not left to chance. The *Yishuv* leadership in Palestine had long been preparing for this moment, anticipating the aftermath of the war. As early as 1943, when the realization had hit the leadership that the European Jewry was being annihilated, planning attempts began for steps that the Zionists should make once the war would be over. As this became reality, the Zionists, striving to help the remaining European Jews instantly, initiated contacts with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA), and established the Relief Units of the Committee for Diaspora. The latter was to be an autonomous, presumably non-political, body that would put together teams of helping professionals—mostly doctors and nurses—to be sent first to Greece, and later, at war's end, to Germany and Austria.[41]

Yishuv planners were busy contemplating moves that would later bring all the Jews that would remain in Europe—now named *She'erit ha-pleyta* (Surviving Remnant)—to Palestine, after the war would be over. The fate of the future survivors was discussed in various forums, and considered in many ways. And yet, throughout the debate, consensus on one issue remained broad: All the survivors of the terrible events taking place—which were now beginning to be disclosed, and to be seen as a national holocaust—must come to Palestine, because

the country needed them as much as they needed the country. David Ben-Gurion, leader of the Jewish community in Palestine and Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, openly declared that "the essence of Zionism is population: Populating Palestine with multitudes of Jews."[42] Moshé Sharett, director of the Political Department of the Agency, referred to survivors before the war ended thus: "We hope that not all of them will perish, that some will survive, that there will be a *She'erit pleyta*, as this *She'erit pleyta* is the main foundation upon which we are trying to build a national edifice."[43] It was clear to planners that only in Palestine would survivors find peace and quiet, and a sense of belonging, as another leader, Pinchas Lavon, remarked: "Only this country will be able to absorb them, heal them, naturalize them and help them regain their national and personal equilibrium—no other place or country but our own can meet this challenge."[44]

Towards this goal, an organizational infrastructure began to be built. That bringing the survivors to Palestine would not be an easy task was quite clear to the planners. They assumed that the sentiment among survivors would be similar to that revealed in the Dachau survey: "We must not think that thousands upon thousands will come knocking at the country's gates once they open," said Ze'ev Schind (*alias* Danny), a senior *Mossad* commander. A practical man, he made a concrete suggestion: "The Zionist movement must understand that it has to be first on the market. All the political parties in Diaspora will not have the strength needed to lift the Jews to acts of Zionism, and thus our own envoys must move and work together with the Allied armies."[45]

And first measures were soon indeed taken. The Jewish Agency for Palestine founded (for the first time) a Department for Diaspora Affairs, and the various political parties in Palestine made preparations for the absorption of immigrants. They designated future envoys to post-war Europe, and were holding organizational and ideological conferences dedicated to the subject.[46]

This matter led to new rivalries among the different political movements in Palestine, as each was hoping to extend its power-base through *She'erit ha-pleyta*—by garnering the support of big chunks of the Surviving Remnant. A debate ensued, naturally, and it was finally decided that survivors would be cared for by organizations common to all Zionist bodies, such as the Jewish Agency. Beginning at the end of 1944, seminars and courses were held that prepared prospective emissaries, so that they would be able to arrive in Europe as soon as the war was over, begin giving help to needy survivors, and most importantly, mobilize them to the Zionist cause. The bitter argument among the ideological movements nonetheless persisted, and it would later spread to the DP community as well.[47]

Envoys from Palestine were not the only actors in Schind's plan. Soldiers and officers of the Jewish Brigade of the British Army, like Khoter-Yishai and his men, were also part of it. "We have an extraordinary interest," said Sha'ul Meirov (Avigur), head of *Mossad*, "in stretching the existence of the Brigade for as long a period of time as we can after the war, so that it would be involved in rescue missions and immigration operations."[48] Indeed, *ha-Merkaz la-Golah* (the Center for Diaspora), established in Italy in 1944, would effectively direct the activities of the Brigade's soldiers, now turned into (sometimes clandestine) European emissaries of the Zionist movement.

The Children's Journey to the Promised Land Begins

One role Brigade soldiers took upon themselves was to gather Jewish children hidden away in monasteries, or with non-Jewish families. Prior to fighting in Italy, the Brigade had already played a role in rescuing children, as it was involved in an affair known as the "Tehran Children" operation that brought children from Europe to Palestine through Asia in 1943. Brigade men thus had some experience in this matter.

Now Jewish orphans were to be found in many places, having survived thanks to the goodness of Christian families and institutions that hid them throughout the war. Brigade men, directed by the Jewish Agency's *ha-Merkaz la-Golah* were mobilizing to retrieve them, and assemble them in specially designated orphanages, where they were to be cared for, receive Zionist education, and be trained for immigration to Palestine.

This process was not always easy: The removal of children from adopting families required violence at times. Many families who rescued Jewish children were now treating them as if they were their own. To retrieve these children, Brigade men occasionally resorted to force. The child Yosef (Jef'ke) Mendelevitch (later, IDF Major General Yossi Peled, Commander of Israel's Northern Theater) and his sisters were removed from the Christian family that raised them almost from infancy. Brigade men "came in one day, armed, and threatened them saying that 'these are Jewish children and they must give us away, otherwise they would suffer'. They had no choice but hand us over, and we were put in a Jewish orphanage in Belgium [...] My sister told me, although I myself have no such memory, that we both refused to leave the house, and that to this very day, my screams still echo in her head. I did not want to go, for me it was a very cruel day when I was taken away from there."[49] Thus many orphans were gathered, and orphanages founded.

One of the best known institutions was the orphanage in the Northern Italian town of Selvino, founded with the help of the local Jewish community, run and directed by Brigade soldiers. The Selvino House gave shelter to children retrieved from Christian orphanages, to children who had been in hiding, and were now found, and also to some orphans who had survived death and concentration camps. Run by soldiers, the House had a strict, tersely worded code: Homework must be done on one's own; the burden of responsibility is collectively shared; all property is shared; the sole language to be spoken is Hebrew; school discipline is strict; prying into the past is not advised.[50] The

House's main slogan was "The Youth is the future of our People!" and resident children were not permitted to go out and search for surviving relatives, for fear that that would lead them to remain in Europe, rather than go to Palestine. Encouraged by their adult caretakers, many children even took an additional step, and severed ties with their families, focusing on being part of a cohesive group that was forging its spirit, preparing for the final effort towards the ultimate common goal—Palestine.[51] The Selvino orphanage became a transitional home for hundreds of children, and many thousands passed through similar institutions, their period of residence there being just another part of "the journey to the promised land." Later on, we shall encounter children whose journey was not as smooth.

The success of the Selvino House and similar institutions was the result of careful preparation by the Zionists. Some of it had been designed for children, larger parts were for adults. It was, altogether, an impressive infrastructure set up in advance (parts of which were functioning in areas of Europe that had already been liberated), that was beginning to be deployed in Germany in the early summer days of 1945, aimed to establish an ideological beachhead and organizational foundation for the survivors, so that multitudes of Jews of all ages would eventually come to populate Palestine.

In the DP camps, things were developing slowly. An attempt was made to form a committee that would bring together all the Jewish DPs in Europe, under a single, Zionist banner. To make this happen, another convention—the First Congress of Jewish Survivors in Germany—took place in the St. Otilien hospital at the outskirts of Munich on July 25th 1945. The Congress, organized with the assistance of Brigade men, as well as Jewish Agency envoys, featured some one hundred delegate DPs, who were representing 50,000 Jewish residents of camps in Germany and Austria. The assembly was both a success and a failure: It failed to establish a central committee as was originally intended, yet heads of the various delegations, including the Jewish

Agency, the Brigade and the DPs themselves, came out with a joint public proclamation:[52]

> We, the Surviving Remnant of the great European Jewry that was led to slaughter and murdered, whose sons and daughters battled our enemies as partisans in the forests of Europe, in the streets and bunkers of ghettos, in group uprisings throughout Europe, in the ranks of the Allied forces and in the units of Palestine volunteers of the Jewish Brigade, are calling out as one nation, demanding
>
> 1. The immediate establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.
> 2. The recognition of the State as an equal member of the United Nations, with the right to participate in the Peace Conference;
>
> Signed on this day, the 26.7.45, (16th of AV, 5705) in the Munich beer cellar.[53]

This proclamation is unique in a number of respects: First, it was symbolically drawn up in the same beer cellar where Hitler attempted his 1923 *Putsch*. Second, it was written in Yiddish, a language that was to become the DPs' official language, being the only tongue common to all eastern European Jews. Finally, although the proclamation was made on behalf of the survivors, very few of its ten signatories were actually DPs themselves. Most were Palestine envoys (including the Jewish Agency's Eliyahu Dobkin, who was the first to sign, and the one to note [in Hebrew] the time and historic location of the event). Indeed, the organizational ability of the Palestine envoys, and the means they had at their disposal, was most instrumental in bringing them closer to their goal. It is, therefore, not surprising that an almost sudden change of heart was observed in a majority of the camps' residents. The envoys arrived with a well-articulated plan, and demonstrated an ability to carry it out. These impressive capacities were greatly appreciated by the DPs.

Other forms of Jewish organization existed as well, though not in the same order of magnitude. Small groups of survivors settled in cities, squatted in empty buildings, becoming "free living Jews," as they were named by the American occupation authorities; others established *kibbutzim*—Zionist groups organized for the explicit purpose of immigrating to Palestine and settling in an agricultural village. The first of these, *Kibbutz* Buchenwald, had already been founded as we have seen, and its members eagerly awaited their turn to immigrate. Dozens of such groups were formed in the years to come.[54]

These events took place even before any of the large Jewish welfare organizations arrived on the scene. The most important of them all, the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), as well as the Palestine Relief Unit, would reach the survivors only months later. Thus the first organizational steps—which are remarkable particularly in view of the absence of such actions on the part of refugees of other nationalities—were successfully accomplished either by the DPs themselves, or with the help of the handful of US Army rabbis, the Jewish Agency and *Mossad* emissaries and agents, and of the soldiers and officers of the Jewish Brigade. These early operations were most important, as to a large extent they determined the social structure of the survivors' camps, and had, as we shall see, far-reaching implications for their future.

As time went by, refugees kept flowing into the American Zone. And so, in the summer of 1945, there were already up to 100,000 Jewish DPs in the occupied territories of Germany, Austria and Italy.[55] In Germany, they were scattered in some twenty DP camps, in cities, farms and hospitals.[56] To most Jews, major changes were still in store: Within a few short months, they would be separated from the non-Jewish DPs, and brought under the aegis of mostly Jewish administration. In the British Zone, Rosensaft would unite the Jewish DPs under the auspices of The Central Committee of Survivors in the British Occupation Zone of Germany. In the American Zone, The

Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria was established—*Zentral Komitet*, as it became known in Yiddish, or the *Z.K.* in short.

3 Diplomats, Emissaries and Entrepreneurs

> European Jewry is the anvil upon which we must forge our inevitable and open revolt against the British and distill our aspiration to achieve immediate Jewish sovereignty.
>
> David Ben-Gurion, 1946[1]

The Harrison Report and its Aftermath

News of the terrible fate of the Jewish survivors in the camps soon reached American, British and certainly Zionist policy-makers. Reports by US Army rabbis who entered the camps with the occupying forces, letters that Jewish organizations in the United States began to receive from survivors, and news passed on by friends and relatives, mobilized Jewish leaders, Zionist and non-Zionist alike, to exert pressure on the Truman Administration to do something about the matter.[2] It was the Secretary of Treasury, Henry Morgenthau (soon forced to resign for reasons connected with this issue) who finally took initiative. He recommended that the State Department send a commission of inquiry to Germany, to assess the gravity of the situation. Soon thereafter, early in July, a mission headed by Judge Earl G. Harrison (who had already held posts that pertained to immigrant and refugee issues) left for Germany to look into the state of refugees throughout the American Occupation Zone, especially Jews. Members of the Commission inspected the crowded camps where survivors lived under military rule behind barbed wire; they met Jews living in stables; they spoke with people who "had no clothing other than their concentration camp garb—a rather hideous striped pajama effect—while others, to their chagrin, were obliged to wear German SS uniforms.

It is questionable which clothing they hate the more."[3] Harrison further noted the survivors' pressing need to search for relatives. He witnessed crowded and inappropriate living quarters, learned how poorly survivors were nourished: "One must raise the question as to how much longer many of these people, particularly those who have over such a long period felt persecution and near starvation, can survive on a diet composed principally of bread and coffee, irrespective of caloric content. In many camps, the 2,000 calories included 1,250 calories of black, wet and extremely unappetizing bread. I received the distinct impression that [...] large numbers of the German population [...] have a more varied and palatable diet." He and his survivors' commission also saw that some of the hardships were a result of the callous treatment they received from local military commanders.

Shaken by the terrible scene in Germany, Harrison and his colleagues returned to the United States. In August 1945, they presented a report to President Truman. The Report contained not only a description of the Jews' miserable living conditions, but also an analysis of their needs. In view of the atrocities the Jews had suffered, wrote Harrison, they now deserved preferential treatment. Under present conditions, he wrote dryly, "beyond knowing that they are no longer in danger of the gas chambers, torture and other forms of violent death, they see—and there is—little change." The Commission further attempted to review the aspirations of survivor DPs, and proposed ways to fulfill them. As for their wishes for the future, the report stated that "most Jews want to leave Germany and Austria as soon as possible. That is their first and great expressed wish [...] and many of the people themselves fear other suggestions or plans for their benefit because of the possibility that attention might therefore be diverted from the all-important matter of evacuation from Germany. Their desire to leave Germany is an urgent one. The life which they have led for the past ten years, a life of fear and wandering and physical torture, has made them impatient of delay. They want to be evacuated to Palestine now, just

as other national groups are being repatriated to their homes [...] Some wish to return to their countries of nationality but as to this there is considerable nationality variation. Very few Polish or Baltic Jews wish to return to their countries; higher percentages of the Hungarian and Romanian groups want to return, although some hasten to add that it may be only temporarily in order to look for relatives. Some of the German Jews, especially those who have intermarried, prefer to stay in Germany."

Harrison further observed that among the Jews who wished to resettle, some were seeking passage to the United States, England, or South America. Yet—and keep in mind that he did so informally and not on the basis of a poll—"with respect to possible places of resettlement for those who may be stateless or who do not wish to return to their homes, Palestine is definitely and pre-eminently the first choice," even though "it is also true however, that there are many who wish to go to Palestine because they realize that their opportunity to be admitted into the United States or into other countries in the Western hemisphere is limited, if not impossible."[4]

The Report also recommended practical steps for Jewish DPs: First, those who wished to return to their countries of origin should be helped without delay. Second, help should be extended to those who do not wish to return, in recognition that "for some of the European Jews, there is no acceptable or even decent solution for their future other than Palestine." Therefore, Harrison recommended that the United States government appeal to the British, so that asylum would be offered in Palestine to 100,000 Jewish refugees, in accordance with a similar request of the Jewish Agency, already presented to the British government. Third, those who wish to emigrate to the United States should be allowed to do so, Harrison said, as long as this is done under the existing immigration laws. At this point in time, stated the Report, the number of requests to enter the United States is not large. Fourth, as long as Jewish survivors are living on German soil, ways to alleviate their suffering must

be found. To this end, the Report recommended the separation of Jews from non-Jews, to make care for the sick a little easier, and improve living conditions. The Report further suggested that camp commanders be tightly supervised, and appointed according to their experience with social problems and their ability to cooperate with welfare organizations. A special office should be opened for the search of lost relatives.

The Harrison Report raised a storm of emotions in Washington. Indeed, some of its recommendations were promptly implemented: In most places, Jews were immediately separated from others; a conscious effort was made to improve their living conditions and handle them with special attention. Some further steps were also taken right away: General Patton, infamous for his negative attitude towards Jews, was replaced, and an Advisor on Jewish Affairs was appointed in the American Zone. Judah Nadich, Chief Rabbi of the US Army in Europe, was summoned from Paris and appointed first Advisor before the end of August. He would be soon replaced by a civilian, Judge Simon Rifkind from New York.[5]

But more than anything else, the Harrison Report put the subject of Zionism on the table. True, Harrison touched upon this matter only through his recommendation to accept the Jewish Agency's demand, and open the gates of Palestine for 100,000 DPs, but his position was obviously related to the broader context—to the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine. To Truman and his administration this subject was not new. It had been lingering on Washington desks since the Biltmore Conference in 1942, when the Zionist cause had been publicly endorsed by the main Jewish American organizations.[6] Earlier still, the Zionists had tried to pressure President Roosevelt, Truman's predecessor, to accept the Zionist plan and even include it in the agenda of the Yalta Conference in February 1945. Truman was thus well aware of this subject when he became President. He actually discussed it with

Churchill at the Potsdam Conference. Harrison's recommendation to open the gates of Palestine, and his observation that most Jews "want to be evacuated to Palestine now, just as other national groups are being repatriated to their homes"[7] moved Truman to write a letter to British Prime Minister Clement Attlee, requesting that the British would provide 100,000 immigration certificates to Jewish refugees from Europe.

"I concur in the belief that no other single matter is so important for those who have known the horrors of concentration camps," wrote Truman, who had just returned from the Potsdam Conference, "as is the future of immigration possibilities into Palestine [...] The American people, as a whole, firmly believe that emigration into Palestine should not be closed."[8] Inevitably, then, this was the most problematic recommendation of the Harrison Report, as its adoption threw the Truman Administration into a conflict with the British and the Arabs, and eventually, with the Zionists as well.

This letter linked the Jewish holocaust to the establishment of a national home in Zion. It also turned survivors into potential immigrants to Palestine. Such suggestions were not new: Ben-Gurion, as we have seen, had spoken of the Surviving Remnant as a human reserve for the settlement of Palestine as early as 1943; others spoke in similar terms; even Weizmann, it had been rumored, had mentioned such ideas to Churchill. Furthermore, the Zionists themselves had written to the British authorities as early as June 1945, and demanded that they repeal the 1939 White Paper (that was written under Arab pressure, and stipulated severe restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine), and open the borders to 100,000 survivors[9] (the figure presented by the Harrison Commission was actually quoted directly from this letter). But all this had been written and said by Zionist leaders.

The unique feature of this recommendation—distinguishing it from all other ideas that were flowing in the diplomatic channels between the world powers—was that for the first time,

an explicit demand of this nature was made by a non-Jewish statesman; and not just any statesman—it was expressed by the President of the United States himself. This was a major innovation, which implicated the United States internationally in several respects. First, the demand put the President in a potential conflict with the British. The latter were opposed not only to increasing the quota of Jewish immigrants to Palestine, but even to the idea of separating the 15,000 Jewish DP in the British Zone in Germany from the non-Jews. The Jews, claimed the British, should be treated on the basis of their nationality rather than as a religious sect or race. To give them special treatment would amount to accepting the Nazi theory regarding the Jews as a separate race.[10] For them, therefore, Truman's letter marked a worrisome development.[11] The new Labour Foreign Minister, Ernest Bevin, was in charge of shaping the new policy, and he tried to take two steps: To limit Jewish immigration, and to limit the purchase of land in Palestine by Jews. "The first time I saw him as Foreign Minister", wrote Dr. Chaim Weizmann later, "regarded immigration certificates for refugees. We were granted a ridiculously small number of those—as we were told, these were the remainder of those not used under the [1939] White Paper—and we would be ashamed to bring these to the destitute camp dwellers who were crying out for help."[12] Truman's emotional letter to Prime Minister Attlee, then, was in utter contradiction of Britain's policy. Indeed, Britain's Prime Minister soon rejected Truman's plea rather flatly. He argued that the Jews were not the only DPs, and that singling them out favorably in the camps would result in "a disaster for the Jews, so the army's decision to deal with them as with others is correct." He also claimed that if evacuation of displaced Jews was so urgent, then many of them could be resettled in North Africa, and that at the moment there was no call to alter British policy in Palestine. Far-reaching changes, he claimed, would ignite not only the Middle East, but also India, whose Muslim population was highly flammable.[13]

The Arabs did not like Truman's idea either. They regarded a British acceptance of his demand as a blatant deviation from previous policy, formulated in the aforementioned May 1939 White Paper, the political document achieved with considerable effort subsequent to the Arab revolt of 1936-1939.[14] Among other things it supported "an additional growth of the Jewish national home, but only to an extent acceptable to the Arabs," and limited Jewish immigration to 75,000 within the next five years.[15] Headed by the Saudi King and the Secretary General of the Arab League, the Arabs saw Truman's letter and his subsequent declarations as an outright breach of promises made to them by Roosevelt, his predecessor, that no change would be made in American Middle East policy. They therefore opposed this new stand, and tried to pressure the Administration to go back on its new position.

Even the Zionists, who were supposed to rejoice at the recommendations made by the Harrison Commission, were not satisfied. Their plans at this point were much more ambitious: They now wanted to bring *one million* Jewish immigrants to Palestine, and they feared that setting the quota at one tenth of a million would limit immigration in the long run. Somewhat earlier, on a June visit to New York, Ben-Gurion presented a plan to bring one million Jewish immigrants to Palestine with the support of the strong Jewish community in the United States.[16] Setting the quota at 100,000 might thwart this plan, he feared, so much so that he eventually regarded the failure of the Truman initiative as a favorable development.[17] Moshé Sharett, Director of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, wrote later: "The persistent opposition of the Foreign Office to the demand to let 100,000 in, and the Arab threat to rebel should this demand be accepted, were a blessing to us as they bore long run political fruit. They did not open way for a temporary or partial solution of the problem, but rather, contributed to set the backdrop for a thorough and comprehensive decision."[18]

In addition to all these, Truman's letter (which he wrote

while having in mind his future need of Jewish votes in the upcoming 1948 election campaign), helped distinguish between different American Jewish interests. The letter emphasized the difference between those who worried about the survivors' fate and tried to help rehabilitate them regardless of their intended final destination, and the Zionists, whose first and foremost focus was on the creation of a linkage between the survivors to the question of Palestine, the land already promised to them, so they claimed, in the Balfour Declaration.[19]

Thus Truman found himself stuck between a rock and a hard place. His letter positioned him between conflicting stands on the Zionist issue, which had direct implications on the fate of displaced Jews in Germany, Austria and Italy. On the one hand, the Zionists were trying to link the Holocaust and its survivors to their struggle to populate Palestine with Jews, and make every survivor a potential resident of Palestine. The British, on the other hand, tried to dissociate Palestine from the Jewish DPs. They tried to deny the difference between Jews and non-Jews in the camps, and refused to give the Jews separate treatment (even though by summer's end there were relatively few of them in the British Occupation Zone—about 16,000 or about 3.5 percent of DPs there). This reluctance was meant to underscore the claim that since Jews are just like the other refugees, there is no special connection between them and Palestine.[20] Britain adhered to the 1939 White Paper policy which set the Jewish immigrant quota at 1,500 new entries per month.

Truman's letter to Attlee thus had no immediate practical consequences. But this step, along with Zionist pressure, led to enhanced public interest in the issue of Jewish refugees, and tightened its connection to the question of immigration to Palestine. The result was pressure on the British government, that on the one hand feared to appear hostile to the survivors, and on the other hand tried to avoid an open confrontation with the United States Administration. Thus in October London issued a proposal, on behalf of Foreign Minister Bevin, to estab-

lish an Anglo-American commission of inquiry that would examine the state of Jews in Europe—their demographics, ways to improve their situation, and immigration possibilities to Palestine (which were rather limited, in Bevin's opinion).[21] President Truman, who suddenly found himself deeply immersed in the Jewish-Arab issue, agreed.

The Survivors Settle in the Camps

In late summer 1945, the population of the camps was growing. The influx of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe had not ceased. Rumors were spreading throughout Eastern Europe, about the good conditions in the American Zone of Germany and concerning the chances to emigrate from there. Thus the Zone attracted a growing stream of Jewish refugees. "Eisenhower," said Ben-Gurion, impressed with the Supreme Commander of the European Theater, upon returning (a bit later) from a visit in Europe, "is a superior man [...] one of the most decent people I have met." He understood that conditions in Germany were ideal for those Jews intending to go to Palestine, because the Americans were happy to assist the Zionists in training candidates for Palestine immigration, "to provide help in agricultural and technical training etc., food and living conditions would be improved. In Salzburg Germans were forced out to make room for Jews." This was also done in farms, said Ben-Gurion, marveling: "In no country in the world would land be confiscated for Jews to work it. This is only possible in the American Zone in Germany." As a man of both vision and action, he hastened to propose that the Jews take advantage of these conditions, thinking that "we should encourage Jews to immigrate from all of Europe to the American Zone of Germany," because "all Jews of Poland, all the Jews of Czechoslovakia can be brought there, there would be the very best material conditions in Europe. They would have the chance to learn trades, farming, have books."[22] The US Army Advisors

on Jewish Affairs shared Ben-Gurion's opinion, and, according to him suggested to the Zionist envoys to support Jewish immigration to the American Zone. And Jews were indeed arriving. If in June 1945 the number of Jews in the western occupation zones was several dozen thousand, then in late September, their number increased significantly, despite the high mortality rate and the return of many to their places of origin. This growth was mainly due to the migration of Jews out of Poland and other Soviet controlled territories. The lowest estimate (that had put the number of Jews in June at 27,000) now raised it to over 69,000 on September 30th.[23] Other estimates approach 100,000.[24] The growth happened at a dizzying rate, figures shifting within a mere few days. Reliable demographics about the camp dwellers are thus difficult to obtain. First, this population kept changing as new refugees were coming to the camps from other parts of Germany, while older camp residents were on the move to other camps, either because they thought that those were better, or since they were moving from one camp to the next in search of missing relatives. "Frequently, accurate statistics were not given by the camp residents or by the committee representing them because they feared that if it were known that the camp was overcrowded the authorities might forcibly move some of the residents."[25] But even though the number of Jewish DPs was downplayed, and we may never know them in any accuracy, the enormous growth of the Jewish DP population within a very short period of time is hard to miss. The next two years would see an even greater movement of Jews into the American Zone of Germany; their number would grow two- and even threefold. "At my first visit to Zeilsheim," wrote Rabbi Nadich later, "the camp contained about 150 Jews, while not too many months later the camp population had swelled to over 3,000."

At first, populations were mixed in many of the camps and Jews shared residencies with non-Jews. Yet, as one of the most important recommendations in the Harrison Report was separation, the Army, that was criticized in the report rather harshly,

hastened to make amends. On August 22nd, a letter on behalf of the Supreme Commander, General Eisenhower, was issued to commanding generals, and to the Eastern and Western Military Districts, with the order that Jews should "be segregated as rapidly as possible into special assembly centers [...Jews...] will be cared for in special Jewish centers [...] In establishing these centers, particular attention will be paid to a high standard of accommodation. Whenever necessary, suitable accommodation will be requisitioned from the German population. Military commanders' powers will be fully utilized in order to insure that these persons are accorded priority of treatment over the German population. Special UNRRA teams will be requested for these special centers without delay and these teams will be given maximum operating responsibility and all necessary assistance by military commanders."[26] Separation was to be done gradually—Jews were moved to their own camps, apartments and buildings were confiscated from Germans for them, whereas non-Jewish DPs were either transferred to other places, or returned to their countries of origin.

Thus, as the fall of 1945 was approaching, Jewish DPs were concentrated in relatively few places in Germany: One area was the American Zone in Bavaria, especially around and inside the city of Munich. Camps were large and small. Among the largest was camp Feldafing. It opened at the beginning of May 1945, and at first, was functioning as a camp for Jewish women. It then received non-Jewish inmates, who came from Russia, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia and were liberated by the Red Army. Then it was made a Jewish camp, with 4,900 dwellers at the end of the summer.[27] Another big camp was Landsberg, with over 5,000 Jews (and numerous non-Jews, especially Hungarians, who were moved out there at the end of September);[28] the camp in St. Otilien Hospital (about 800 DPs) hosted the first congress of DP representatives; other well-known camps were Zeilsheim and Fahrenwald, and the smaller Gäuting, formerly a sanatorium for *Luftwaffe* tuberculosis

patients, that now became a Jewish hospital with 200 beds for patients and another 300 for healthy residents. Jews also lived in the city of Munich itself. Beyond this cluster of camps there were a number of small camps around Frankfurt, Regensburg, Stuttgart and Bamberg. More Jews were in the British Zone, concentrated in Camp Bergen-Belsen (burned and transferred to nearby Hohne) and in Berlin. Only a few Jews were in the small French Zone in the West.[29] At the end of this process of separation, conducted in the American Zone with the help of the Army and various aid organizations, local camp committees were to govern by themselves, granted broad authority by the Military Government. These committees ran welfare, health, education, culture and religious services, maintained an employment agency that gave work to significant numbers of residents, and even operated a police force to maintain law and order within the camp. The Jews, especially the Zionists among them, were not shy in making demands from the Army. "To add to my problems," wrote Major Heymont to his wife late in September from Camp Landsberg which he commanded, "I learned today that the young and best elements in the camp are organized into *Kibbutzim*. It appears that a *Kibbutz* is a closely knit, self-disciplined group with an intense desire to immigrate to Palestine. There, they plan to live together in an agricultural commune [...] The *kibbutzim* are after me to turn over to them some farms belonging to Nazis. They want the farms only until they leave for Palestine [...] combined with their problems are the other problems like the kosher eaters and the people who won't work. If there were only one kind of people to deal with," wrote the infantry commander ironically, "it would be a simpler situation..."[30]

Relief for the DPs

The large number of DPs—especially the ever growing Jewish population—exerted pressure of a new kind on the Occupation Authorities. The latter had undergone organization-

al and legal changes in July: From SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters of Allied Expeditionary Forces) they were turned into a civil administration of sorts, the CDPX (Combined DP Executive), representing the three Western powers, UNRRA, and the Inter Governmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR). The most important of these, UNRRA, had already been founded in late 1943 by a joint resolution of 44 states whose representatives had assembled at the White House for this purpose. This organization was supposed to reflect "a joint effort to provide relief and help in rehabilitation for the victims of German and Japanese barbarism," as President Roosevelt said upon signing, "...it would be supreme irony for us to win a victory, and then to inherit world chaos simply because we were unprepared to meet what we know we shall have to meet [...] We have acted together with the other United Nations in harnessing our raw materials, our production, and our other resources to defeat the common enemy [...] We are now about to take an additional step in the combined actions which are necessary to win the war and to build the foundation for a secure peace [...] The sufferings of the little men and women who have been ground under the Axis heel can be relieved only if we utilize the production of ALL the world to balance the want of ALL the world. In UNRRA we have devised a mechanism based on the processes of true democracy."[31]

The US Army, too, was running training programs for military government officers since 1942 and was making itself ready for organizational changes. Reserves of officers and soldiers for military administration were put on alert, and plans were made for a time when combat units would be replaced by a garrison.[32] Despite the preparations, the Army was unsuccessful in carrying out this complex assignment, as could be gleaned from the Harrison Report: "There seems little justification for the continuance of barbed-wire fences, armed guards, and prohibition against leaving the camp except by passes, which at some places are illiberally granted." The report further criticized the

army for a lack of consideration of survivors' needs, for being unable to get around a severe shortage in professional manpower, and for the unsuitability of many officers for their new roles as Military Governors. The Army, in addition, did not see eye to eye with UNRRA officials. Its officers tried to impose military discipline on the DPs, and were resentful of the more gentle approach of the rehabilitation workers. Yet, the rehabilitation organization, too, was unsuccessful in its complex assignment—gathering the refugees, sorting and transferring them elsewhere if necessary, and meeting their basic needs. As long as DPs stayed on occupied German soil, UNRRA was committed to providing them food, shelter, clothing, medical facilities and to accommodating the reunification of families. In this, the organization failed miserably. Its directors had made early estimates regarding its future roles, which dictated the order of manpower it mobilized. But even the wildest estimates of the planners were too modest. Advance planning for every UNRRA rehabilitation team to care for some 2000 people were simply unrealistic. In reality, rehabilitation workers had to handle numbers four or five times as large. And although directors had planned to recruit thousands of workers that summer, they were unsuccessful in finding enough rehabilitation workers and training them properly for the difficult task that was waiting ahead.[33] The little manpower and meager resources that were available at first did not help relieve the suffering of the DPs. They were living in conditions worse than even the bare minimum the army had set: Many places were crowded beyond what was deemed legal (four square feet per person) and in barracks, one room was shared by several families.[34] It took the passage of time to sort things out, and to make sure that millions of DPs begin to receive real care.

Jewish DPs were also receiving care from Jewish organizations, mostly from the United States. An early one to arrive was HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society), dedicated to helping immigrants. This organization had recently assisted Jews in

moving to several countries, and its representatives now arrived, ready to help potential immigrants. Also present were ORT representatives (Organization for Rehabilitation and Training), who helped setting up vocational training schools and centers, and auxiliary units of JRU (Jewish Relief Units)—sent by the Jewish Commission of British Jewry for relief abroad. But the greatest contribution to the welfare of Jewish DP, no doubt came from the JDC, or the American Joint Distribution Committee. This organization had been created by wealthy Jews at the beginning of World War I, and had since offered voluntary support to Jewish refugees and other poor and needy Jews worldwide.[35] During World War II, the JDC was involved in efforts to save Jews, and now, as the war ended and a new Jewish refugee problem emerged, it was getting ready to help. The advance of the Allies from the East and the West enabled JDC representatives to enter liberated areas, and to offer help to Jewish survivors. On the Eastern front, now under Soviet control, they were active (albeit under tight constraints that the Russians imposed) since the end of summer 1944. In Romania they were active since the end of that year. They were also in Hungary in early 1945, immediately after its liberation. They even went to the Balkan countries, once these countries were taken by Allied Forces. The Western front was more easily accessible to the JDC, as it was occupied mainly by American and British forces that arrived from the west. JDC workers gained immediate access to liberated areas and could begin their rehabilitation, relief and organization work. Still, the problem of displaced Jews was so acute, that even the JDC could not contain it. Like UNRRA staff, its representatives had already spent about a year in Europe, trailing the advancing forces, looking for Jewish refugees who survived the Holocaust, and trying to help them heal and recover. Still, in many instances, their arrival was later than planned. Members of the Buchenwald Youth Pioneer Committee, whose emotional letter was previously quoted, had no choice but to wait until mid-June, because bureaucratic, technical and politi-

cal obstacles prevented JDC workers from entering their camp. Bergen-Belsen, as well, was reached by JDC representatives only in July, three months after Liberation.[36] Later, in August, Jewish volunteers arrived from Britain.[37]

When rehabilitation workers arrived, "earnest, conscientious and devoted servant[s] of the Jewish people,"[38] they immediately began their important relief work: They supplied food and clothing, established medical services, made sure the camps were receiving educational, cultural and religious services, tried to help DPs with immigration issues (regardless of destination) as well as in searching for lost relatives; they even started organizing for the establishment of vocational training centers for adults.

In the next few years, the JDC would take a formidable task upon itself. The number of people needy of its services was greater than ever. Its supporters, United States Jewry, were not blind or indifferent to the pressing situation. They realized that in order for the organization to be effective, its budget must grow significantly. Identifying with the suffering of Holocaust survivors in Europe made American Jews increase their donations to Jewish charities, and as a result, the budget of the JDC, which until the war had amounted to just a few million dollars a year, was growing significantly as Europe was beginning to be liberated in 1944. It then underwent a sudden increase and in the first year after Liberation leapt to $54.1 million. This amount would further grow in the next three years, as the budget for areas in which DPs were concentrated—Germany, Austria and Italy—would be generous, growing even higher from one year to the next, to make these regions top the list of JDC funding.[39]

Yet the JDC was not alone in the competition over the pockets and the generous hearts of American Jews. Its chief rival, the Zionist movement, was also engaged in fundraising in the United States. The Zionists were quick to realize that the pool of donors, and likewise the depth of their pockets, had limits. Increased contributions for survivors in Europe threatened to

be at the expense of support for the Zionist enterprise. Among those concerned was Ben-Gurion. Answering a question at a meeting of Jewish Agency leadership (even before the end of the war) "What are our aspirations in the United States?" he said: "Zionist fund-raising, not fund-raising of the World Jewish Congress." Still, as time went by, the JDC, which had intentionally avoided taking a position on Zionism, was now massively subsidizing the activities of the Zionists. At about the same time (early 1945), the Zionists had already managed to secure a JDC commitment of 38 percent of its overall future budget for Zionist purposes. They were not satisfied with this amount, however. At that same Jewish Agency Directorate meeting, the treasurer called for an increased level of JDC funding and proposed to demand 50 percent of its budget.[40] Thus, similar to Truman's letter to Attlee, hints of a conflict between different Jewish interests were beginning to show. The JDC, whose mission statement included "helping Jews live a dignified life in a place of their choice,"[41] tried to shy away from activities that had a political flavor, attempting to act in a manner that would contradict neither American nor British policy. Thus it sought to avoid being identified with the Jewish struggle for a national home, for fear that such identification might blur, or even contradict, its expressed American identity. "When we found people in trouble," Joe Schwartz, European Director of the JDC, said later "we were not concerned with how they got there, and why. We helped them [...] We did not put people on boats [...] They needed help so we helped them."[42]

Fall was coming, bringing relative calm to the DPs. Most of them were already separated from their past captors, residing in Jewish camps, and feeling relatively secure and protected. Life in the camps was settling into some sort of a routine, however poor its conditions. The Army, already having an Advisor on Jewish Affairs, as well as relief workers, had already begun intense relief activity and tried to be better coordinated. In the camps, new and more considerate commanders were appointed.

"I am Major Irving Heymont," began the commander in his opening speech at Landsberg.

> I am a professional soldier in the US Army. By order of my higher headquarters, I have been placed in charge of the Landsberg Camp.
>
> As I speak to you tonight, I can also be called a sort of DP. I, too, am far away from my native land where I would like to be [...] We know you have suffered in the Nazi concentration camps [...] I want to assure you that I do not intend to see the Landsberg another prison camp. We did not conquer the Nazis so we could have the hollow honor of standing armed guard over the victims of Hitler.
>
> Effective tomorrow at 6:00 AM, the pass system is abolished. Every resident of the Landsberg Camp is free to come and go as he sees fit, subject to current curfew regulations applicable to all civilians.
>
> Effective tomorrow morning, all American guards will be withdrawn from this camp. Americans do not run concentration camps, even humane ones [...] We will, however, maintain one guard at the main gate. The duty of this guard will be to aid your camp police and to keep out unauthorized Germans—not to keep you in.
>
> Tomorrow morning, I will ask your camp leaders to furnish men to tear down the barbed wire that now surrounds the camp.[43]

Political Entrepreneurs

The Zionists, on their part, did not remain idle. They worked hard, operating on three levels: On the diplomatic level, they strove to persuade the world that Jewish DPs should all immigrate to Palestine. On the organizational level, they dispatched aid missions to the occupation zones. These were to join groups of now-discharged Jewish Brigade soldiers—Palestine men who were willing to remain in Europe after their military tour had been terminated, and work under the supervision of the

Center for Diaspora that was operating in Italy. Some ex-Brigade men had moved to the camps or their vicinity already in the summer, and engaged in rehabilitation work with the DPs. On the political level, an internal struggle between the political parties in Palestine was launched, and representatives of different ones started touring the DP camps, in an attempt to win the hearts of residents, and to secure their future support.

All these activities brought hundreds of envoys, emissaries and functionaries of Zionist organizations to the camps. First to arrive were secret *Mossad*, *B'richáh* (Flight) and *Ha'apaláh* (Illegal Immigration) agents and organizers, engaged in illegal Palestine immigration operations (clandestine and illegal due to the severe restriction of the immigration of Jews to Palestine that the British rulers imposed). Following them were political activists of all Zionist political bends; from emissaries of the Jewish Agency (some wearing UNRRA uniforms as members of the Palestine Relief Unit) to leaders of youth movements, teachers, educators and kindergarten teachers, who helped build a well-developed educational system. Later, even a small detail of the paramilitary *Haganáh* arrived, seeking to give training to the DPs, initially for self-defense, later in preparation for their Palestine immigration and recruitment to the fighting forces in 1948. Palestine representatives were quick to guard their newly established turf, particularly in relation to the Central Committee of DPs in Bavaria, the *Z.K.*, as well as to local camp committees. Thus, for example, directors of the new Zionist Center that opened in Munich, rushed to write the *Z.K.* that, itself, had been formed two days earlier:[44]

> The Zionist Center in its plenary session on July 28th, 1945, discussed the relationship between the Zionist Organization and the Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria, and decided as follows:
>
> "In order to maintain cooperation between the Zionist Organization and the Committee of Liberated Jews, the Center has decided to delineate the mode of

> action of the Zionist Organization. The Center stipulates that all Palestine related activity such as representation vis-à-vis Zionist institutions, culture and education, training, immigration, and political Zionist activity, is to be solely directed by the Zionist bodies—The Zionist Center and local Zionist committees."
>
> We hereby bring the resolution to your attention and hope for mutual understanding and joint effort.

Jewish leaders also came to visit the camps. Eliyahu Dobkin was among the first, and he was followed by representatives of the Relief Committee of the New York Union of Rabbis, Dr. Yitzhak Levin and Dr. Shmuel Schmidt, who arrived in September together with Dr. Zorah Warhaftig of the *Mizrahi* political religious movement.[45] This group was trying to locate and rehabilitate surviving orphans, and came to the camps after a visit to France (an event that will feature later in this story). Professor Selig Brodetsky, a British Zionist leader, traveled to Bergen-Belsen in the British Zone, and on October 19th, David Ben-Gurion came, as part of his trip to visit with European Jewry. He came from Paris, toured several camps and met with the American commanders. He was received most enthusiastically by the DP community that organized parades and festivities in his honor. Crowds gathered to greet him, and he responded with electrifying Zionist speeches: "Palestine is no longer a vision, a dream, a hope, but a necessity that we, the *yishuv*, and you, *She'erit ha-pleyta*, will turn into reality in the near future," he said. "And you, the direct representatives of our people's suffering, you are the driving force. You must be strong, and from what I have seen, I know you will be strong."[46]

"It seems that he represents all of their hopes of getting to Palestine," wrote Major Heymont of the DPs' reception of Ben-Gurion. "To the people of the camp, he is God."[47] Ben-Gurion spoke with the people, saw their living conditions and concluded that "these are the best Zionists possible in Europe." He also met with American commanders. "Were there a Jewish

state," said Rabbi Nadich to Eisenhower when he introduced Ben-Gurion to him, "I would now be introducing its Prime-Minister to you."[48] Indeed, Ben-Gurion behaved as the DPs' leader, and during his meetings with the American generals, he presented demands on their behalf: He demanded that an autonomous Jewish zone be establish in Germany, and was turned down. Other demands, however, were accepted: The Allied authorities accepted his demand to grant self-government to the Jewish camps, and to his request to confiscate German farms and hand them over to Zionists for agricultural training of DPs in preparation for their Palestine immigration. They also accepted his suggestion to give DPs vocational and military training.

The positive reactions of the Americans made Ben-Gurion very optimistic. Thanks to their excellent treatment (especially Supreme Commander Eisenhower and his deputy, General Walter Beddel-Smith), "Europe will have the best material conditions. It will be possible to learn trades, farming, they will have books [...] This is only possible in the American Zone in Germany."[49] The DPs in Germany, then, were an important human reserve for the Zionist movement.

All Zionist parties dispatched representatives to the camps, to try to influence potential immigrants to join them and thereby increase their political power base in the *Yishuv*. The partisanship of these emissaries and the pressure they placed on the DPs met with resistance. The burgeoning DP leadership tried to establish a uniform Zionist organization, and avoid internal splits and political infighting. "In Auschwitz we were cremated without party distinctions," said Aryeh Retter, an activist, "so we can live without them on our way to our homeland as well." But Palestine representatives would not let them do so. This activity caused friction and splits in the social structure of the camps, since "all movements volunteered to go to help *She'erit ha-pleyta* with a self-serving intention of strengthening their powerful."[50] Warsaw Ghetto veteran and hero Antek Zuckerman, for example,

appeared that fall in the office of one of the DP leaders and threatened to "break" him if the latter would oppose partisanship in the camps.[51] A short but bitter struggle ensued, and the Zionists had their way: Party structure was imposed, and became a part of camp life.

But not all camp-dwellers were Zionists. Opponents of Zionism were there as well. Some tried to go back home at first. Groups of Bund Party members, in particular, had returned to Poland and even tried to convince others to join them. Those remaining in the camps were searching for new destinations for immigration, and tried to organize and persuade their friends to struggle for the opening of the gates not just of Palestine, but of all countries in the world, to Jewish refugee survivors. Small Bundist groups successfully organized in a number of camps, in an attempt to fight for the right of Jews to immigrate anywhere. They also established contact with Bund Committees in the West, especially in New York, Brussels and Paris. But all that was not enough: Their groups were too small, resources were hardly available, and without major organizational capacity, the gathering of a political force that would oppose the Zionists was impossible. So Bundists remained isolated and in many cases even ostracized. Besides, many of them had by now changed their minds: Before the war they had been Zionism's most fervent opponents, but now, they had become soft, as one Bundist leader in Camp Feldafing said: "On the question of Palestine," he said, "all Jews are united;[52] not about *'aliyáh*, but about the right of Jews to self-determination in Palestine and the abolition of British rule there." But the Bundists, he added, seek to struggle and open the gates of all the countries in the world, not just Palestine. To this, the Zionists were opposed, as they thought that such an eventuality would weaken their position. Bundist author Chava Rosenfarb, later from Montreal, describes in her book *Brif zu Abrashn* (Letters to Abrasha) a dramatic event in the British Zone at the end of September 1945 (present, among others, was British officer Chaim Herzog, later the President of the State of Israel):[53]

> A survivors' conference was held at Bergen-Belsen [...] All present were fervent Zionists. Professor Brodetsky, a Zionist leader from England, spoke of the hope to establish a Jewish state.
>
> Then the time came for questions from the floor. Without thinking, Miriam leapt to her feet, got on stage, stood behind the podium, and spoke her mind. It must be demanded, she said, that the gates of all countries, not just Palestine, should be open to survivors.
>
> The crowd would not let her finish. People screamed, whistled, jeered. Angry people in the audience waved their fists at her. "Enough! Bring her down!" was the cry heard from all directions.
>
> A young man, his fists tight, jumped to the stage and pounced at her. She was not scared. She was boiling with fury, why wouldn't they let her speak? But she was dragged down the steps. As she tried to force her way through the crowd, she felt that one more moment they would have lynched her. Marek pushed his way towards her, grabbed her arm and dragged her outside [...]
>
> That evening, Miriam wrote a letter to Abrasha: "I am dazed and confused. The truth is that not only the world has not changed much; neither have we. I know for a fact that many of the conference organizers, fervent Zionists and all, have applied for immigration to America."[54]

Bundists were not the only potential opposition to the Zionists. The ultra-orthodox (*Haredim*), too, might have so turned out, and unlike the Bund, they were effective organizers. But for apparently pragmatic reasons, the ultra-orthodox decided to work together with the Zionists in the camps. In Feldafing, for instance, a Yiddish newspaper, *Dos Fraye Vort* (The Free Word), that was common to all, was founded.[55] It so transpired, then, that of all the different Jewish organizations and movements, only one had the *a priori* upper hand. "The Zionists," wrote Koppel Pinson, an American social worker who arrived with the JDC mission from the United States and was in charge

of education in the camps on their behalf, "were the only ones with a sensible plan following this catastrophe."[56] The enthusiasm, determination, and superb organizational skills that the Zionists demonstrated (part of which was the fruit of years of advance planning), combined with their acute political vision, helped them sway many of the survivors, neutralize their opponents and become the dominant force in the DP community. Their mission was made even easier by the Harrison Commission Report, which brought about the creation of Jewish camps. Indeed, as far as can be gleaned from the (not necessarily representative) surveys held at that time in various camps, a dramatic change had taken place in a short period of time. While before, only a minority expressed an interest in Palestine immigration, the situation now was reversed: In Camp Landsberg, an immigration survey was conducted by the JDC in early October 1945. Of 4,976 DP respondents, 3,112 (62.5 percent) had chosen Palestine as their preferred destination, and 884 (18 percent) wished to immigrate to the United States.[57] Rabbi Nadich, too, reports that, in a survey he ran among 452 Jews of Camp Stuttgart in September, about 60 percent wished to settle in Palestine immediately. The rest wished to stay in Germany for a while, try to find lost relatives, and then immigrate to the United States, to Canada, South Africa or France.[58] At the end of January 1946, the Jewish Agency reported that 50-90 percent of the DPs were interested in Palestine *'aliyáh*.[59] These figures should of course be compared to the Dachau poll in May, where only 15 percent expressed their interest in Palestine. This rapid shift evidently occurred prior to the Anglo-American committee's arrival at the camps, that joint commission that was formed early in 1946 after Britain rejected Truman's demand to let 100,000 Jewish DPs immigrate to Palestine. How exactly did this shift in public sentiment happen? Did the DPs now interested in Palestine immigration actually fulfill their wish? Did their position remain unchanged in years to come? Where did they go, and what were their motives? An examination of life at the

DP camps in subsequent years might provide answers to these questions. Before doing that, however, we turn our attention to those who had even less control over their own fate—child survivors in Germany.

4 The Children Affair

You always hurt the one you love
The one you shouldn't hurt at all
You always take the sweetest rose
And crush it till the petals fall.

sung by the Mills Brothers
(written by Fisher and Roberts)

An Orphan Boy Here, and an Orphan Girl There

The few who survived the death camps, death marches and slave-labor camps, were mostly young and strong adults. Neither children nor the elderly had much of a chance of coming out alive. Consequently, there were few children in the DP camps, a mere 3.6% of the total Jewish population in Germany at the time of Liberation.[1] "Just *a yoseml do, un a yosemle dort*—an orphan boy here, and an orphan girl there—with whom we are to carry on [...] With them we begin our destitute world from *bereshis boro*—from square one."[2] Only later, when refugees began swarming into Germany, did the number of children go up, as children hidden in monasteries, kept in cellars, barns, and hiding in forests and farms were retrieved, and brought to the DP camps. Even so, the few children who were in the camps in the early days posed serious challenges for the emerging DP leadership: First, they were mostly orphans who required adult supervision and patronage; second, they needed special care, better hygiene, and improved nutrition; finally, they required education. A first idea for a solution was to quickly remove them from the camps, and shelter them outside Germany. Indeed, thanks to early initiatives (both private and organized), a number of children were immediately evacuated, and taken to countries where conditions were better and the

atmosphere calmer. These places gave the children a chance at rehabilitation, recovery, and growth.

Still, thousands of children were lingering in the DP camps, their suffering generating empathy and a desire to help. Perched on bunks amidst the filth like all survivors, their weak bodies were, more than the rest, suffering from malnutrition and disease. A religious DP from Camp Landsberg described the gravity of the situation in a letter to Dr. Warhaftig, the *Mizrahi* envoy: "Of a family of 50 [...] all that is left is myself and my two sons. My children are very weak and I live in the camp with neither clothing nor blanket, and not a penny to my name. I appeal to you, I am calling for help, SOS, take the children away from me, get them out of this damned hell."[3]

The plight of children always stands out at times of trouble and upheaval. The suffering of young and innocent human beings is something that even the most cynical of politicians can hardly ignore. The troubles of survivor Jewish children indeed touched the hearts of leaders and organizers, and many Jewish and Zionist organizations and aid societies with a history of care for children, especially orphans, were quick to take action.

Some Jewish activists from the United States were already on the European scene at Liberation. These were representatives of the Jewish American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) who had been traveling around Europe since 1944, following the footsteps of the advancing Allied troops, searching for needy Jewish survivors. Involved in relief and aid operations since its establishment in World War I, the JDC began devising rescue plans for Jewish orphans from the moment it was disclosed that a few thousand Jewish children survived the camps, and that they were in very poor physical, as well as mental, health. Initial efforts to move children to calmer locations were successful: The first evacuation operation took place as early as June 1945, and involved the removal of children from Buchenwald to Switzerland. On the request of Saly Mayer, the JDC representative in Geneva (and a veteran of rescue attempts during the war),

the Swiss government agreed to admit Jewish camp-survivor children through its borders. The Swiss gates were opened conditionally, though: Mayer had to make a formal commitment to the authorities, guaranteeing that the children would leave Switzerland after a short period of recuperation. The promise was kept to the letter: The JDC soon convinced the French government to host this group, and 441 children from Buchenwald, together with another 94 who were liberated by the Americans in the final days of the war as they were taken off a Nazi train traveling to Bergen Belsen, were transferred to France.[4]

JDC envoys were not the only active players in the matter of children. The British Jewish community entered the relief scene relatively early as well. This community had previous experience in founding aid societies, having been famously involved in the transfer of Jewish children from Germany to England in 1938, as part of the International Movement to Save the Children that brought 10,000 children to England before the war broke out in 1939.[5] At war's end, the same organizations began mobilizing for the evacuation of Jewish children from the British Zone of Germany. Thus, in August 1945, leaders of the British Jewish Community, the wealthy Montefiore family among them, appealed to the government, requesting permission to carry out a rescue operation from Bergen-Belsen in the British Zone. Permission was granted, and the planning of a rescue project began, in collaboration with the American Friends Service Committee.

Blueprints for other operations, aimed at the rescue of children, were beginning to be drafted as well. A prominent group was the orthodox *Mizrahi* movement, whose leadership was part of *Va'ad ha-hatzallah* (The Rescue Commission) of the Rabbinical Association of New York and Canada. Jewish religious movements in the West were especially worried about orphans whom the war had prevented from keeping their religious practices, and wanted to return them into the bosom of the Jewish

religion. Evacuation was the next natural step. Rekha (Rachel) and Yitzhak Sternbuch, Swiss nationals, and European representatives of the Orthodox, had already established contacts with several European governments as an initial step toward the realization of this plan. Now, senior envoys from New York were about to be dispatched to Europe.

The *Yishuv* leadership, mainly the Directorate of the Jewish Agency, were also watching the situation quite closely. Leaders and planners were worried about the fate of the children, and were making plans to transfer them to Palestine. Yitzhak Gruenbaum, Chairman of the Agency's own *Va'ad ha-hatzallah*, reported in a Directorate meeting as the war was nearing its end, that "according to news received here intermittently, the number of [Jewish] children liberated from concentration camps is in the thousands. There are also children in France, Belgium and the Netherlands," he said, proposing "to transfer the children who are still in concentration camps to Switzerland, on condition that their immigration to Palestine be guaranteed. It seems that we must [...] demand [from the British] twenty thousand additional [immigration] certificates for children."[6]

The Agency was aware of the success of early rescue attempts to Switzerland, and of the fact that these successes encouraged aid organizations to try and remove more children from the camps. Indeed, attempts to broaden the rescue operations were being made, as the envoys of the New York Rabbinical Association and *Mizrahi* were retrieving children from monasteries. The Jewish Agency quickly learned that the destination of these children, however, would not be Palestine: They were to be sent to rabbinical schools and *Yeshivos* in France, the United States, or England. The religious groups were now trying to extend their operations and obtain more entry permits to several countries for child survivors, whether as transit visas, or papers for permanent residency.

In view of these moves, the Zionists were becoming increasingly worried. The specter of Jewish children going to

European countries seemed threatening to them, as it ran counter to their project—to bring all surviving children to Palestine, as part of Ben-Gurion's vision "to populate Palestine with multitudes of Jews." Thus an immediate solution was proposed, that from this point on, children would not constitute a special category. Conflating children with adults, they reasoned, would thwart the rabbis' effort, and thereby strengthen the Zionist cause. "It is not good, in our opinion, to demand immigration certificates for children only," said Moshé Chayim Shapiro, a religious representative, at the same meeting of the Jewish Agency's Directorate, "because in doing so we might weaken our broader demand in the matter of immigration." And Eliyahu Dobkin of the Immigration Department (just about to embark on his visit to Germany where he would draft that DPs' Proclamation at the Munich beer cellar) added: "The children should not be made a special problem. Instead, we must talk about immigration to *Eretz Yisrael* for all ages and all kinds."

But Gruenbaum was persistent: "If we do not transfer the children to Switzerland immediately," he claimed, "their lives will be in danger, and most of them might starve in the concentration camps." "If we use this argument," Dobkin replied, making his priorities explicit, "our opponents will propose to make special orphanages for them on German or other foreign soil. We must take advantage of the victory celebrations, in order to promote our immigration demands."

Gruenbaum was not convinced. Children, he thought, should not be made part of the political discourse. The Zionist leadership therefore needed "to distinguish between children's immigration and questions of policy." He also expressed regrets about decisions made in the past, and, realizing that he was holding a minority opinion, concluded that "had we demanded only children's immigration before, we would have obtained the desired [immigration] certificates."

Regarding the past, Gruenbaum's reflections were factually incorrect: Previously, *Yishuv* leaders did separate the plight of

Jewish children from that of adults. They did so as part of an earlier attempt to obtain permission to bring more children to Palestine. Towards the end of the war, in late 1944, *Yishuv*'s parliamentary body *'Aseyfat ha-Nivcharim* (The Congregation of Elects)—appealed to the United Nations, requesting help in obtaining British permission for the transfer of orphans from Europe to Palestine. "The Jewish community in Palestine sees itself as having a great duty and an urgent role in bringing Jewish children and orphans, currently in liberated, as well as occupied, countries of Europe, to *Eretz Yisrael*."[7] This unanimously endorsed appeal of the Congregation also contained language to the effect that Palestine had a unique role in these children's future: "Only immigration to Palestine will guarantee their existence and their future as Jews and human beings. The *Yishuv* in Palestine sees these children as its very own, and announces its willingness to make every effort necessary to brings them here and educate them." The common view was that rescue (of all Jews, not just children) was possible only in Palestine. "Only this land can absorb them, heal them, turn them into citizens and restore their national and human balance—no other place or land will do so, except our *Yishuv* and country," said Pinchas Lavon, a prominent *Histadrut* (labor union) leader, in a 1943 speech about the future *She'erit ha-pleyta*.[8] Now, at war's end, a declarative act of separating the children from the rest of the survivors was not favorably perceived. To the Zionists, this possibility seemed to not only risk the loss of potential immigrant children, namely those who would be transferred to European and American locations, but also to mitigate the force of the Zionist argument altogether. If surviving Jews would have no place to go to other than Palestine, it was thought, then the Zionist case would be vindicated. Thus, unlike in 1944, when a separate appeal to save children seemed to work in favor of the Zionist cause, Gruenbaum's proposal to transfer of the children to Switzerland was now broadly opposed by the Agency's directorate, because it appeared to run contrary to the

common good. From that moment on, the Zionists made no special demands regarding children.

While the Zionists were focusing on the immigration routes to Palestine, other aid organizations and their envoys continued to exert pressure on western European governments to host children from DP camps in their countries. Winter was approaching, and this was of some help: The government of France heard the appeals of lobbyists for the Rabbinical Association, and agreed to take in five hundred children, who were to come and stay in France, accompanied by fifty teachers. The British government also opened its gates to children from the British Zone, and they were taken in by various organizations, including UNRRA and the Jewish Refugee Board in London. Yet new objections to the evacuation of the children were now beginning to be raised. The Zionist fear that the transfer of children to England and France would send the wrong message to the world was just about to manifest itself, and would have rather serious consequences.

The Children Who Never Reached England

Activists of the British Jewish Committee, who at war's end took immediate action, convinced the British government to grant entry permits to 1,000 child survivors. The evacuation operation they organized started with the blessing and assistance of Home Office officials. The organizers even used Royal Air Force planes, authorized and appropriated by the War Office, and "on a lovely summer evening, the first group, consisting of three hundred children, arrived as one plane after the other landed gently. Military buses and lorries were provided for the trip from Carlisle to Windermeer [...] The immigration authorities did everything they could to ease up matters. No questions were asked, and it is possible that no other group of immigrants ever entered this country with a more favorable welcome and minimal amount of checking. The work at the absorption center was

done by members of Jewish youth movements, activists in refugee organizations, including trained teachers and nurses, and in addition, a rabbi completely invested in this mission, who scrubbed floors, cleaned and washed, played football and conducted prayers."[9] Conditions for recuperation were superb: Excellent care was provided by the Jewish community, the children were taken by adopting families, and rabbis and community leaders were in touch with them on an almost daily basis.[10] Yet the activists never managed to complete their mission—not all the children from Bergen-Belsen and the rest of the British Zone landed in England. The DP Camp Committees in both the American and British Zones, who had initially agreed to the evacuation of the children, now reconsidered the matter and changed their position. In an especially well-attended session of the *Z.K.* of the Liberated Jews in Bavaria on October 14th, 1945, which, like always, took place at the German Museum in Munich, a change of policy was announced: Permission to evacuate children DPs was withdrawn.[11]

Participants in the meeting were not only members of the *Z.K.* of Jewish DPs in Bavaria, but also, Rabbi Abraham Klausner of the US Army, Rabbi Judah Nadich, the Army's Advisor on Jewish Affair, JDC representatives, and Zvi Langsam, a representative of the Jewish Brigade. The condition of the children currently living in the camps was quite the opposite of those already in England: "The few children we have," reported Committee Member Puczyc (Esq.), at the opening of the session, "need urgent, special help as winter approaches. We have appealed to the JDC to do something for the children. Here in the camp we are about to send one group to England this week, and another to Switzerland soon. We have made a special effort to concentrate the children from all the camps in the St. Otilien Hospital [Munich], where they can be treated properly, and where they may prepare themselves for a new life." Yet, unlike previous times, the idea of evacuation was not well received. "Considering matters in Palestine," said Engineer Leibovich, a

representative from Munich, "we must object to the evacuation of the children to England. England sends soldiers to Palestine. England must know that we are ready to give up on its hospitality until our problem is finally resolved." And Zvi Langsam of the Jewish Brigade added: "We do not want England to think that this is a solution to our problem." The general sentiment, thus, was against the continued rescue operation to England. Indeed, a new resolution was put forth, which now referred to the DPs by the Zionist nomenclature:

> *She'erit ha-pleyta* is reluctant to follow the path of Diaspora as guests in foreign lands, despite the strong desire to leave the blood-soaked soil of Germany as soon as possible.
>
> The last stop in our painful route is outside the fences of the concentration camps, the crematoria and gas chambers. We will keep suffering here until the doors of our old-new homeland open for the remains of the European Jewry to enter, because only there shall we find a permanent home for ourselves and for generations to come, and only in its air will our still bleeding, open wounds, heal.
>
> We hereby declare that we shall not let ourselves be pushed from one country to the next, and that we have decided to stay in the German camps until the world's conscience opens the gates of *Eretz Yisrael.*
>
> We refuse to send the children to England.
>
> *Zentral Komitet* of Liberated Jews in Bavaria

And so, the *Z.K.* in the American Zone prohibited further evacuation of children. Its counterpart in the British Zone was immediately informed. Though not unified, the Jewish DP Central Committees in the American and British zones held regular meetings and coordinated their activities, and hence a parallel statement from the British Zone against the evacuation of children was issued soon thereafter.[12] In its October 21, 1945

session, the *Z.K.* in the British Zone declared that "a. It is unable to accept the evacuation of children to England; b. It is unable to permit the children, who were with us in the ghettos and concentration camps, to be kicked around from one Diaspora to another; they must stay put until their *'aliyáh* [immigration] to Palestine; c. It demands that the first immigration certificates [to Palestine] be allocated to children, so that they can leave the camps as soon as possible."[13] Notably, this decision ran counter to the recommendation of the UNRRA authorities, who had feared for the children's lives because of the horrific conditions at the DP camps. No more children were to leave for England.

Yet the British Jewish relief and aid organizations were not ready to give up their evacuation initiative at this stage. They maintained that the reason for the decision was the DPs' suspicious attitude toward anything British, due to His Majesty's government's strict position on the matter of immigration to Palestine. And with this, they reasoned, the children had little to do. So, in order to get a first-hand impression of the situation and negotiate with the DP leadership, and hoping to convince the DP leaders to change their minds about the children, they sent an envoy, Shalom Adler-Rudel, to the camps. His actions, one should note, were not kept secret from the Zionists. On the contrary: He previously worked for the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, and was now fully coordinated with the Directorate.[14]

Adler-Rudel traveled to Germany and visited the American and British Zones, toured the camps, and met DP leaders and UNRRA workers. What he saw shocked him. He was now convinced that the children must be evacuated at once. In vain he tried to convince the *Z.K.* to let the children leave. The *Z.K.* would not budge. Disappointed and frustrated, Adler-Rudel gave a speech in the final meeting he held with the DP leadership, in which he expressed his anger and frustration. To the *Z.K.* of Liberated Jews in the American Zone he gave a speech on November 25th, 1945.[15] Aware of the close relations between the *Z.K.* and the Jewish Agency, he noted that the latter had been

deeply involved in the decision to disallow the exit of children: "In the matter of the children there is an understanding between the Agency and your Committee," he said, "[...] I think that you should reconsider your decision, because the [Jewish] Agency will not take any decision in the matter of the children." His words were almost unanimously rejected. "We are at war with England, our children do not want to leave because they understand the situation," replied Engineer Leibovich, referring to the struggle in Palestine and to the orphan DPs as if they were both his own. "The position of the Zionist organizations is negative" said David Treger (who himself settled later in the United States),[16] "we will interfere with the transfer of the children to England." And so, all the speakers save one objected to Adler-Rudel's request, upholding the previous decision to forbid the evacuation of children. Adler-Rudel's mission failed, and he concluded the discussion on a bitter note: "I have been through this together with you, albeit differently. I am a good Zionist," he berated the Committee, "your decision is not right."

The events surrounding the evacuation of children, and the relations among the Zionist institutions, the British Jewish community, and the *Z.K.*, were taken up by Ben-Gurion as well. The newly enacted ban on their immigration to places other than Palestine, coincided with his visit to Germany and the DP camps in the Fall of 1945. There is little need for speculation on the connection between his trip and the decision. Upon his return to Jerusalem, Ben-Gurion himself detailed his role in the children's affair in the November meeting of the Jewish Agency directorate.[17] The story he recounted was similar to Adler-Rudel's, yet his position on the matter was quite different:

> I came to England and spoke to the comrades. I thought that it was clear what the Zionist reason was, but Professor Brodetsky told me: No, they appealed to the English Government and after much lobbying they obtained a permit to admit one thousand children. They

had already made arrangements with the Air Ministry; now they will say no, they cannot. I said to him, suppose they had asked you to carry out this action in order to save England, and you agreed, could you now say no? It's not fair, but you requested a favor from England. Now when it turns out not to be a favor but something negative, you pass it up, why not pass it up? But they are ashamed.

I said: Two weeks before my arrival, people there had decided to forbid the evacuation of the children. They would use force, and I understood why. They are Zionists, they understand the Zionist reasoning just like me, I don't know why the Zionists in England need it.

When I came to Bergen-Belsen they came and asked me: The next day an airplane is to come pick up fifty children, what should they do? I said: I am unwilling to tell you anything [...] Pressure was exerted on me, but I refused to say what I thought. I finally said: One piece of advice I will give you. Tomorrow is the Sabbath. You can say that you will not let Jewish children be flown on the Sabbath. But to no avail. They took them away on the Sabbath by force, and after that they decided to forbid a forcible evacuation of children.

The matter was closed. A frustrated Adler-Rudel could only file a report with UNRRA upon returning to England in late December.[18] To the organizations that had sent him he openly said that "the opposition of the Committees [to the evacuation] is mostly political and does not take issue with the condition of the children in the camps." In the presence of UNRRA officials, however, he defended this decision, arguing that the emotional ties between the camp people and the children made separation difficult. He proposed that as a compromise, the children be moved from the British Zone to the American Zone. He also recommended that the authorities refrain from any forceful action. But in addition to his report, Adler-Rudel sent a letter to the Jewish Agency Directorate in a last attempt to influence the course of events.

To these addressees, he could write in a rather different mode. Although it did not challenge the authority of the Jewish Agency, his strong letter gives another twist to the affair, as it does to the involvement of the Zionist leadership in Jerusalem in decisions made by the *Z.K.*:

> [...] I feel it as an obligation to point out to you that I consider it an urgent necessity that the children from the American and British zones should be removed from the camps as soon as possible, for the following reasons:
>
> (1) In spite of the general improvements which have taken place in all the camps [...], the situation is still such that there is a shortage of food, overcrowded houses and, in some camps, an almost complete lack of heating [...] A thorough medical examination of the children in Belsen has shown that most of the children are suffering from heart affection and some of them from affection of the lung. Doctors who, for political reasons, are against sending the children to England, advise at the same time their immediate removal from the camp.
>
> (2) [...]
>
> (3) The children themselves (and I have spoken to many), if they are alone and not afraid of the presence of [...] the Brigade or members of the Camp Committee, do not hesitate to say how much they would like to leave the camps and how they hated to continue living there. Most of them are decided in their intention to go to Palestine, but they are not willing to see that their coming to England would interfere with their going to Palestine. They are certainly not children in the usual sense of the word. They are mature and know very well what they want to do. Although it seems that they gave in to the demands of the Committee and the Brigade, to join the opposition to their going to England, psychologically the pressure under which they have been brought does more harm to their Zionist convictions than their removal to England ever would have done. Some of them who were not in the Jewish camps stated very strongly that they would prefer

> to go and work in some small German place and live in private houses, rather than continue their life in the camps [...]
>
> (4) The political value of the demonstration not to allow the children to come to England is controversial. As far as the authorities in Germany are concerned (UNRRA, the American and British Military circles), the objection to letting the children go has certainly done more harm than good. **The camp committees and the central committees in Munich and Belsen themselves did not feel very comfortable when they prevented the children from going [...] and said that [...] if the [Jewish] Agency should decide that the children should go to England, they, the people in the camps, would not hesitate for one second to agree to it. This statement promoted the Agency in the eyes of UNRRA and the Military Authorities in Germany to a very important body**. They look, therefore, with great expectation to the result of my mission.[19]

Acknowledging his failure, Adler-Rudel then made a compromise proposal: He suggested that the children would be evacuated from the camps in the British Zone to the Blankenese area, near Hamburg, in order to improve their living conditions. He further pointed out that the success of such a move would much depend on the number of envoys and educators from Palestine who were to arrive to Blankenese. As for the American Zone, he was convinced that there, too, the removal of the children was urgently needed. He made two suggestions: To either send the children to Palestine, or advise the *Z.K.* to withhold objections to their evacuation to England. "As Winter in Bavaria continues until the end of April—or even until May—I ask for an immediate decision."

Stubborn as he was, Adler-Rudel also made yet another attempt: He suggested that the *Z.K.* would allow the removal of children abroad if they had relatives who were willing to take them. That, he pointed out, is not only humane, but also, in the interest of the movement: "The fact that children who have rel-

atives are prevented from joining them is creating so much ill-feeling, that introduces an enormous amount of harm to our cause and to the authority of the Zionist movement," he wrote.

These sentiments belonged not only to different parties inside the Zionist camp; the children themselves had an opinion of their own as well, and as Adler-Rudel wrote to the Jewish Agency, many of them actually wanted to go to England. Some of them even put that in writing. "For six years we were living in concentration camps and have until now not found our parents" wrote Gershon Pasanowsky, (age fourteen and a half) and Bronia Katz (age fifteen) to the JDC delegation in Munich. "They are probably not living anymore. We have decided to avail ourselves of England's offer to have orphans come to study there and to go to London immediately [...] We are looking forward to receiving your answer at the earliest possible moment, telling us what we have to do in order to proceed to London."[20]

The *Z.K.*'s decision, nonetheless, remained unchanged. Only the idea to move the children from Bergen-Belsen to Blankenese was accepted by the *Zentral Komitet* of the Jews in the British Zone.[21] An orphanage was founded, on the beautiful estate of the Warburg family, founders of the JDC. It was directed by a Jewish Brigade man. The range consisted of several buildings on a hill facing the River Elba, and in mid-January 1946, about one hundred children were taken in—a far cry from the number previously approved for England. They stayed in the camp until immigration certificates were obtained for them by the Jewish Agency, and on April 9th, 1946 they were sent to Palestine.[22]

Memory, however, has its own mysterious ways. "The solution," Adler-Rudel would write fondly a dozen years later, "was typical to the *modus operandi* of the Central Committee [...] They always knew how to defend their rights and principles. At the same time, they also knew how to find a constructive solution to their problems."[23] The article he wrote, in which he was looking positively at the chain of events after the fact, made

not a single reference to the strong letter its very author had sent the Jewish Agency, nor would it recount the circumstances that led to Adler-Rudel's mission to Germany in the first place.

The Children Who Never Reached France[24]

At war's end, Rekha (Rachel) Sternbuch of Switzerland, European representative of the Rescue Commission of the Rabbinical Association in New York and Canada, was engaged in locating Jewish orphans that had been hidden in monasteries during the war, and finding Jewish institutions that would receive them. Two emissaries of the Committee, Dr. Yitzhak Levin and Dr. Shmuel Schmidt, joined her, arriving in France from the United States at the end of July 1945. With them was Dr. Zorach Warhaftig of the *Mizrahi* movement. The three had already heard of the horrible conditions in the DP camps in Germany (that Dr. Levin would soon visit), and realized that evacuation of the children from the camps was an urgent matter. They were therefore determined to obtain entry permits to France for the camp children. Their mission was to ensure that "Jewish children, the last remains of our human treasure that was annihilated in Europe, would not be handed over to any non-Jewish body, least of all the church." They arrived in France equipped with various references and introductory letters, and began lobbying immediately, hoping to obtain two thousand entry permits for children, to be set up in an institution where they were to conduct a Jewish way of life, with funding from the Rabbinical Association.

Initial negotiations with French government officials, also involving the JDC and others, led the religious emissaries to the conclusion that their original demand was not likely to be met as presented. The French government, they realized, was not as enthusiastic about granting entry visas to child refugees as they had hoped. Levin, Schmidt and Warhaftig thus made a more modest request, only asking for 500 children visas, and another fifty for accompanying adult educators.

The lobbying effort was successful this time: In October, all the required documents were obtained from the French government, not before the lobbyists made a commitment to try and find alternative future shelters for the children—whether in Palestine or elsewhere. Things were looking up, at least for some children. But at this point, just when the evacuation operation seemed ready to begin, a new obstacle surfaced: UNRRA, which was supposed to give its approval to the evacuation of the children (being legally responsible, in part, for their fate), made new requirements. It demanded that children be selected in a way that ensured that no siblings were separated. It also stipulated that each transferred child explicitly consent to the move after being given a detailed description of the religious way of life the group was about to lead in their new home, and that information about every child be available at UNRRA's offices so that relatives, were they ever found, could locate them in the future. UNRRA also requested details on the living conditions planned for the children, about their education, funds and other resources allocated to them, and the ties between the Rabbinical Rescue Commission and the Jewish Agency.[25] The emissaries regarded these demands as an attempt to jeopardize the entire operation, but finally consented to some. The operation was now ready to begin, and the three rabbinical scholars went to Germany. Yet, when they arrived to gather the children and make final arrangements for the evacuation, "they were up against a wall."

The *Z.K.* had learned about the activities of the emissaries in France and convened to discuss the matter. Discussions did not have to be long this time: A decision forbidding the transfer of the children to France was issued at once. "Liberated Jews have just one immigration option: Palestine," the statement said. In a meeting in which US Army, UNRRA and JDC officials were present, *Z.K.* Chairman Dr. Grinberg made it clear to the emissaries that already in October, the *Z.K.* decided against the transfer of children to England. Dr. Grinberg argued that in this respect France

was on a par with England. He told Drs. Levin and Warhaftig that there would be no more "intermediate steps that are not real solutions *en route* from the crematoria and gas chambers. Either the children go to the place they need and have a right to go to—Palestine—or they stay in the camps."[26] He gave the emissaries a letter that was identical to the one sent to England, but for one additional sentence: "We refuse to send the five hundred children and fifty teachers to France." No group of children was transferred from Germany to France.

Grinberg and the *Z.K.* did not make the decision alone: Ben-Gurion was also involved, as a speech he later gave in Jerusalem reveals. Earlier, when in Paris, he had met with the religious emissaries to explain the motivation behind the Zionist objection to the rescue operation: The evacuation of the children from the DP camps and their temporary transfer to France, he said, might weaken the struggle for free immigration of all Jewish refugees to Palestine. After Paris, Ben-Gurion traveled to the DP camps. Aware of the evacuation plan to France, he was now able to intervene with the *Z.K.* during his tour. His own account of the affair, given on his return to the Jewish Agency directorate, is very clear:[27]

> I was told that there are emissaries of the *Agudah* and *Mizrahi* (religious movements)—Warhaftig—who want to remove these five hundred children...The things Jews are capable of doing... incredible!

He further described his conversation with Warhaftig in Paris: "I asked him why he was doing that [trying to evacuate children]. He agreed that Zionist considerations were against it, and thus proposed that, if I agreed that others would not evacuate, he would not evacuate, because it is inconceivable that his institution would be the only one to suffer." Ben-Gurion then concluded: "In England there is also an institution that evacuates children, and in Switzerland too. I object to the removal of Jewish children to England, even to Sweden—the best country

in this respect. It is necessary that they be there—it's good for them, it's good for the Jews [...] it is a Jewish interest that in the American Zone there will be a large Jewish force. America will pressure Britain, de Gaulle will not." The value of human suffering for political bargaining was very clear to Ben-Gurion, who was quite willing to use it years before Arab leaders used the 1948 refugee problem in a similar vein.

Still, the condition of the children in the camps was desperate, and Ben-Gurion understood that in order to convince the Jewish Agency Directorate that they should not be taken anywhere else, direct and stronger reasons were necessary. He thus argued:

> It will be nothing but harassment against the Zionists, if the children are sent to Aix-les-Bains or to England. There are many children in Europe. Most of them are converted [to Christianity], they are brought up without a religion. You know I am not religious. In *Eretz Yisrael* I do not need religion. Still, religion returns the children to Judaism. In France, where Judaism cannot exist without religion, [...] many will be converted [to Christianity].

This argument may have convinced some members of the Directorate, but it was plainly false. The conversion story could be imaginable, perhaps, in connection with children brought up in monasteries, but could not possibly be relevant to the rescue operations conducted by the Rabbinical Commission. On the contrary: The Commission's professed goal was to return the children to Orthodox Judaism. All the actions of the Rabbinical Commission, and of emissaries Levin, Schmidt and Warhaftig, were geared towards the removal of the children from the Christian environment that sheltered them during the war and saved their lives, and to putting them in a religious Jewish context. Not far from the Swiss border, in Villa Raphael in Aix-les-Bains, Rekha Sternbuch opened an orphanage and a *yeshiva*, funded by the New York Rabbinical Committee. Named 'Sages

of France' *yeshiva*, it geared itself towards "opening its doors to dozens of learning (*Torah*)-thirsty students." In the orphanage, the children sang Hebrew songs, ate kosher food and prayed. "These children, who recited their prayers so nicely, had almost been converted," reported Levin to New York approvingly, describing his visit in the orphanage.[28]

The steps Ben-Gurion and the *Z.K.* took—whatever the reasoning behind them—were successful: The evacuation plan failed. This failure effectively blocked all the paths out, except the one leading to *Eretz Yisrael*. "In view of the decisions of the DP Committees against the temporary removal of children to other countries," wrote Warhaftig in his memoirs, "we canceled an additional plan to evacuate three thousand refugees and five hundred children to Italy, a plan that had already been negotiated with the authorities in Rome."[29]

5 Generals and Social Workers

I've always depended on the kindness of strangers.

Blanche Dubois (Tennessee Williams,
A Streetcar Named Desire, 1947)

The Establishment of Military Government

The DPs were not the only ones preparing for an extended stay in Germany. The occupying armies, too, having already grown accustomed to their status as garrison, began to settle in, rapidly adjusting to the new state of affairs. The various welfare organizations followed suit as well. The US Army had previously readied itself more thoroughly than others for the task of governing civilians, and now, fresh graduates of the Charlottesville, Virginia, School of Military Administration, and of other training programs initiated in preparation for the end of the war, started arriving in Germany.[1] Order-of-battle for the Military Government was over 6,000 officers, NCOs and enlisted men. They were entrusted with a formidable task: To reinstate daily routines amidst the devastation, and restore some degree of normalcy in the society. They were also expected to take steps toward the rehabilitation of the scarred country and its economy, as well as toward the reconstruction of civic society. The Army also took upon itself the role of implementing the Allied de-Nazification program, carried out through the removal of Nazi activists and party members from public office and key positions. These tasks had to be carried out swiftly, and the constant friction with the Red Army, which was trying to implement its own agenda in Germany, did not make the job any easier. Difficulties thus abounded: In addition to the Soviets, the US

Army had problems with itself, as matters pertaining to Military Government did not quite fall into place right away. The beginning was rough, and the organizational structure of government underwent several transformations, adjusting itself to new situations, until it stabilized sometime in 1946.[2]

This painful process was especially taxing because the end of fighting marked the beginning of Military Government, and thus combat personnel initially had to fill in administrative positions, until the arrival of specially trained professionals. Many field commanders, who had no notion of the aims and functions of military government, now became Military Governors, and were in charge of complex logistics as well as daily problems of large civilian populations. They were, naturally, unprepared. Worse yet, the condescending attitude they had toward non-combat staff—administrators and governors in this case—made them dismiss administrators as an unnecessary nuisance that gets in the way of proper combat procedure. General George S. Patton excelled in this regard: He and his staff not only withheld support from administrators; they also created obstacles that prevented their mission from being carried out properly.[3]

The status of administration officers within the Army, very low at the beginning, improved considerably with time: Germany was divided into four occupation zones, the Allied Supreme Command was removed, at least officially, from its central position of power, and the era of Military Government began. Its administrators, usually older than regular military staff, were either members of the Army Reserve called up to duty because of their civilian occupations, or military personnel with relevant professional skills. Still, the supreme military commanders served as both commanders and governors. These were General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, and later President of the United States; his successor—General Joseph T. McNarney, an Army pilot, with combat experience from World War I; and most notably, General Lucius D. Clay, the third Supreme

Commander, yet the American soldier who actually was Germany's general manager from the very beginning of the Occupation. Originally from the Corps of Engineers, Clay had been assigned to General Eisenhower's staff owing to his reputation as an outstanding administrator and organizer. His extraordinary skills immediately promoted him to the position of chief of staff of the Military Government in Germany, and in 1947, he succeeded McNarney, becoming Governor and Commander in Chief of the American Occupation Force in Germany. He "was determined to make things run [...] A person of tremendous drive, a compulsive worker [...] Clay pored over the technical reports that were flooding in from across the country, using his extraordinary memory to master the detail of his new environment. With few private distractions and an overwhelming need to direct events, he gravitated to the work of rebuilding."[4]

Thus more than anyone else, Clay was involved in virtually every change, rebuilding and restructuring that took place in the Army and in Germany during those critical years from the end of the war until the division of Germany and the institution of the West German parliament in September 1948.

The policy of the US Army in the occupied territories (and as a result, of all three western powers) was formulated in a policy document issued in Washington by the Joint Chiefs after the Yalta Conference in February 1945. This document, JCS/1067 was distributed among the commanders after May 21st, 1945, and was intended to serve as a guide to the perplexed American garrison in Germany. The policy it dictated took into account not only the Allies' goals in Germany and Austria, but also made an attempt to optimize the Army's mode of action, while taking the friction with the Soviets.[5] This important document placed the army not only as a vehicle for the implementation of the United States occupation policy, but also as the front line force, engaged in the Cold War that had begun.

This document, first and foremost, granted the Supreme Commander with sovereignty over the occupied areas. It aimed

for a "just, firm, and aloof administration which would discourage any fraternization."[6] The Army and the civilian population, then, were to be kept separate. It also dictated a profound reform in the structure of German government, as de-Nazification required total dismantling of the Nazi party, abolition of Nazi law, of the *Wehrmacht* (and *Luftwaffe*), and the destruction of all its weapons. It also ordered the arrest of senior Nazi officials in various organizations (*Gestapo*, the Nazi Party and Hitler Youth, the SS, all branches of police, *Wehrmacht* commanders, high government officials, and more). The document also instructed the Governor to interfere with the economy only when necessary, that is, when the needs of the Allied forces were to be tended to; it also allowed interference that would ensure the supply of basic commodities, for the prevention of infectious disease, or in order to avoid social unrest that might put the Army in danger. In addition, it ordered a complete separation between Germany and Austria. Finally, JCS/1067 stipulated limits to the powers of the Governor, barring him from being involved in the rehabilitation of the economy and industry. Actions in this direction depended upon joint decisions of the Allied Control Council (ACC), whose members were the supreme commanders of the US, Russian, British and French military forces.

Military administration officers were expected to function within this narrow, convoluted space. Their job thus had to be done not only in coordination with United States government authorities, especially the War Office and the Department of State; the Governor was to coordinate with the ACC, and on many occasions even report directly to the President. It is not difficult to imagine the magnitude of confusion that descended on the US Army, given the vagueness of this complex, cumbersome structure. The precise workings of the administration were far from apparent even to an insider.

The tasks these people faced were enormous: They were supposed to run a country whose entire infrastructure had been devastated, and do so within strict economic, logistic and polit-

ical constraints, imposed both by the situation on the ground and by the interests of the principal players of the Cold War that had already began. Production was nearly at a halt. "It seemed obvious to us [...] that Germany would starve unless it could produce for export and that immediate steps would have to be taken to revise industrial production,"[7] wrote Clay in his memoirs. Yet the complex administrative structure that was initially imposed by JCS/1067 made work rather difficult.

Contacts with the political echelons were close and frequent. "General Eisenhower," writes Clay, the organizational wizard, in his memoirs, "invited me to lunch with Secretary Stimson, after which we sat on the terrace [...] and listened to the Secretary express his philosophy of occupation. He had not even thought of military government as part of the Army Command. He visualized it as a separate and distinct task to be executed by an organization directly under the theater commander. He recognized the need for controls, favored adequate security measures, and believed that the arrest and trial of the Nazi leaders and war criminals were of utmost importance to future peace. He would have no part of policy based on vindictiveness [...] He could see no purpose in the deliberate destruction of the German economy, because he was convinced that its reconstruction was essential to create an atmosphere in which it might be possible to develop a true spirit of democracy [...] General Eisenhower and I went to the airport to see Secretary Stimson off," Clay recalls, "and as we stood to salute when his plane roared down the runway, I felt once again that we have been in the presence of a great American."[8]

Led by Clay, the Military Government also participated in forming the United States policy during the stormy beginning of the Cold War. The Army was not always happy to do so. Thus ironically, Clay, a moderate pragmatist (unlike tough, conflict-happy Cold Warriors like Dean Acheson, John Foster Dulles, James Forestall and George Marshall, all of whom later served in Eisenhower's cabinet and National Security Council), was the

one Army commander to eventually take the most concrete steps to violate both the Yalta and Potsdam agreements: It was the US Army that united the American and British occupation zones at the end of July 1946;[9] the Army also took part in the Marshall Plan, implemented in summer 1948 to close the economic gap between West Germany and Western Europe, but which then widened the gap between East and West; Clay was behind the change of monetary system in the western territories, a step that brought about a total economic disconnection between East and West;[10] it was also Clay and his Army who lifted the dramatic siege that the Soviets had laid on Berlin in June 1948; finally, Clay and the Army helped establish the West German Republic some months after this event.[11] The Commander of the Theater, and the Military Government officials, were thus heavily involved in a huge variety of matters and problems. They repeatedly found themselves dealing with matters of local and global policy, and in addition had to carry out their day-to-day military responsibilities.

On the Military Government's agenda, then, the DP problem was but a minor issue. By fall 1945, the US Army in Germany and Austria was downsized significantly, and when McNarney succeeded Eisenhower as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe in November, the number of US Army soldiers in Germany dropped to 100,000.[12]

McNarney may have had a smaller force to command, but he spared no effort in restructuring the Army's command-and-control. At the same time, he was trying to rebuild German society and restart the paralyzed economy in line with the "American way." He ran the complicated project of de-Nazification—the Allied attempt to remove active Nazis from positions of power by setting up local committees that would determine the fate of such public officials.[13] Along with commanders of the other armies, McNarney also engaged in the effort to repatriate and resettle large refugee and exile populations, and the attempt to find homes for the DPs. As time went

by, the overall number of the latter was decreasing (albeit at a relatively slow pace). The number of Jewish DPs, by contrast, was constantly on the rise, and the Army now had to create a policy regarding this matter.

The increase in the number of Jewish DPs was by no means a miracle. A new phenomenon—infiltration of Jews into the American Zone from the north and east, was expressing itself increasingly. Rumors spread all over Eastern Europe that the American Zone was a way to get passage to America. Thus Jews were sneaking in, settling in the already overcrowded DP camps. McNarney and Clay were forced to try to contain this infiltration, all the while keeping in mind the criticism that the Army had received from the Harrison Commission Report. The Advisor on Jewish Affairs, appointed in response to the Report, was quite instrumental in this respect. As New York Judge Simon Rifkind replaced Rabbi Nadich in October 1945, things were looking up. Rifkind, a man of distinction and class, and a civilian, hence free from the constraints of military hierarchy, enjoyed the support of both Eisenhower and McNarney.[14] He could thus bring the plight of Jewish DPs straight to Headquarters. The Army, in turn, appointed an opposite number to Rifkind—a colonel who was made the Government Officer in Charge of DP Affairs. It was with this officer that UNRRA, the Advisor, the JDC, and later the *Z.K.*, would be in daily contact on all matters that regarded the residents of the camps.

The appointment of an Advisor on Jewish Affairs was a significant step that determined the relationship between the US Military Government and the Jewish DPs. Washington wanted the candidate for this position to be widely accepted and respected. Therefore, selection was entrusted to five leading American Jewish organizations: The American-Jewish Committee, the JDC, the American-Jewish Conference, the World Jewish Congress, and the Jewish Agency for Palestine.[15] The Advisor was to report to, and be advised by, this joint group of the "five organizations," which in addition to the most important

American groups had representatives of the *yishuv* in Palestine. Appointed by the Secretary of War, all Advisors owed their loyalty first and foremost to the Military Government. Yet, they also regarded themselves as representatives and lobbyists of the Jewish DPs. Judge Rifkind, though not the first Advisor, was the one to first serve in this capacity for a significant period of time, and he should be credited for making the Advisor's position so highly respected. Beginning with his tenure as Advisor, all demands, requests and issues that pertained to the Jewish DPs and their camps, were taken very seriously, with Jewish DP matters weighing considerably in United States policy in the American Zone. The position would later be manned by another four prominent American Jews, (with a soldier, Major Hyman, appointed last, as the DP camps were being shut down). The Office of the Advisor handled problems of all kinds: From mundane daily affairs to the struggle to alleviate the overcrowding in the American Zone caused by "infiltrees"—as they were officially called—in 1946 and 1947, to the negotiations aimed to accord the *Z.K.* an official status, and finally, the heavy issue of DP immigration, whether to Palestine, to the United States, or elsewhere.

In the British Zone, which had the second largest concentration of Jewish DPs, there was no shortage of organizational problems either. It, too, was initially run by combat commanders. Field Marshal Montgomery and his deputy, General Sir Brian Robertson, were busy preparing the Royal Army to control and handle civilians. Preoccupied with logistics, repatriation and with the maintenance of the camps in their Zone just like their American partners, they were operating under severe budgetary constraints caused by Britain's failing economy. They thus tried to redirect tasks to UNRRA's jurisdiction (as this organization was financed mainly by the United States government),[16] and at the same time cut down on services offered to Germans as well as to DPs. To many among the latter, not yet fully recovered from the hunger they had suffered, this meant a reduction

in size of food rations: From 2,300 calories a day at Liberation, rations were cut down to 1,850, sometimes even less.[17]

On top of their other problems, the British government was facing yet another serious obstacle: In charge both of Jewish DPs in the British Zone, and of Palestine, they found themselves caught in a vicious circle (that would come to a head during the famous Exodus Affair in 1947). On the one hand, sunk in its steep national debt after the war (about 3.3 billion Pounds Sterling),[18] Britain was heavily dependent on the Americans for financial support, and its new government was thus sensitive to American public opinion, and susceptible to pressure. Any negative criticism of British conduct vis-à-vis the DPs was immediately picked up by Jewish organizations that were constantly complaining about the shameful treatment the DPs were getting in the British Zone. On the other hand, the Arab world was exerting pressure on the British government, to uphold the White Paper policy in Palestine and continue the restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. These pressures were translated into policy by bringing privileges to Jewish DPs in the British Zone down to a minimum for fear that any special treatment would eventually force the British to open the gates of Palestine for them. Yet, the denial of rights, and especially the British refusal to recognize Jews as belonging to a separate nationality, raised harsh public criticism in the United States, which the Labour government could not afford. The added pressure at home by Jewish leaders and Members of Parliament was not giving the government much leeway either.[19] Moreover, the Military Government was witnessing a fast process of self-organization by the Jewish DPs in their Zone, led by an obstinate and charismatic Yosef Rosensaft, who was conducting an effective and uncompromising battle for DP rights. Indeed, the Jews were soon recognized as a national minority, and set apart from the rest, and in April 1946, a Jewish officer, Colonel Robert Solomon, was appointed Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the Military Government and to the Minister for Refugees.

Britain finally granted official recognition, though belatedly and to a limited extent, to the Central Committee of the Jewish Survivors in the British Zone, with Rosensaft as its chief spokesman.[20] The Jewish DPs thus won the battle for official recognition of the two *Z.K.*s, in both the American and British Zones.

Rescue Networks

The economic, medical and social problems that were arising in the British and American zones, inside the camps and out, were far beyond the capabilities of the occupation forces. In the absence of organizations that focus on aid and rehabilitation, of extensive budgets, professional staff and special equipment, no military government would be able to make any order in the chaos that prevailed. UNRRA was luckily in the picture almost from the very beginning. Yet even the thousands of rehabilitation, welfare, health and sanitation workers UNRRA deployed in the zones after Liberation, were far from capable of doing the job properly at first. In the end, their effort did bear fruit: Unlike many notorious 20th century refugee camps elsewhere that have lasted decades, the DP camps were dismantled within a short six years, despite difficulties imposed on the process by the dark shadow of the Cold War. It was a gigantic rehabilitation operation, considered among the most dramatic episodes of its time.

For our story, the importance of UNRRA, JDC, and other relief organizations is far-reaching. The network of aid and support woven by the welfare organizations around the camps serves as background against which the events described here took place.[21]

UNRRA was indeed first and foremost in rehabilitation. An international body, it succeeded the American Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation that President Roosevelt had created in 1942, with the help of businessman Herbert Lehman.[22] UNRRA first set itself to achieve a simple, clearly

delineated goal: It tried to offer a 2,000-calorie daily ration to each refugee, to be financed by one percent of the GNP of the West. It took a while until this giant task was carried out in the midst of the growing conflict between the two superpowers. Every step and every single declaration and criterion set by UNRRA, were not made before being checked against existing agreements between the countries involved. UNRRA could therefore only function within the ever-narrowing margins of the East-West consensus. The mandate UNRRA received was thus limited: It was authorized to repatriate, but not resettle, refugees. Therefore, DPs who for some reason could not return to their homelands were formally outside its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, UNRRA found itself supporting these refugees, simply because no other organization did. This matter now became the focus of a conflict between the superpowers.

The Soviets, knowing that most of the non-returning DPs were from the Eastern bloc, were trying to send them home by force. They opposed the notion that UNRRA would provide aid to these non-repatriable DPs, because it enabled these DPs to remain in the zones controlled by the West.[23] The limited mandate that UNRRA received therefore stood in the way of its workers. Still, under director Lehman (and later British General Frederick Morgan) UNRRA successfully set up over 700 camps and assembly centers for DPs in the western occupation zones.[24] It supplied food and clothing, provided health care, education, and employment, and even tended to cultural needs of the DP population. Participating countries contributed monies towards salary for thousands of dedicated workers, with the United States donating as much as 74 percent of the budget.[25] Many survivors owed their future, perhaps even their lives, to the rehabilitation work of the UNRRA missions (which were multi-national, and even included Jewish Agency envoys from Palestine, who were masquerading as UNRRA staff in order to reach the DPs and stay with them). Yet, UNRRA was disbanded in June 1947, giving way to other organizations that immediately entered the relief

scene (e.g. the IRO, that was later turned into UNRWA—the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, an important organization functioning until this very day in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip). During the relatively short period of activity, however, UNRRA successfully delivered over four million tons of supplies to devastated Europe and other countries in need. "What kind of Europe we would have without UNRRA I truly do not know," said British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin in 1948, "The mere thought is simply horrifying."[26]

Along with the establishment of UNRRA, and the subsequent creation of the United Nations, member states founded a new refugee aid organization—the International Refugee Organization (IRO), which was on the agenda of the first UN General Assembly in 1945. IRO's founding declaration was written in early 1946, and it explicitly stipulated that its function was not limited to the resettlement or repatriation of refugees: "Refugees or DPs without a criminal record will not be forced back to their countries of origin. Some international organization will care for them and encourage them to return."[27] From the middle of 1947 on, the IRO became the UN's main rehabilitative arm. Initially, it was not independent (hence named Preparatory Commission of IRO, or PCIRO), yet in August 1948, as East-West tensions were mounting, it was made the official and independent UN welfare agency, entrusted with the well being of all UN refugees, which even spanned Assyrians holding Nansen passports, as well as Russian and Armenian refugees from a time prior to the Second World War.[28] Here, too, the contrast between East and West was visible: In the United Nations, the Soviets and their allies would methodically vote against IRO activities, claiming that its first and foremost goal must be repatriation, regardless of the refugees' wishes. On the other hand, the West, whose zones housed the largest number of refugees and DPs in the care of the IRO, predictably supported the organization's activity throughout.[29]

The IRO took responsibility not only for the refugees

themselves, but also for their future, that is, their resettlement. The gates of western countries were slowly beginning to open in the late 1940s: England, Canada and the United States, upon various legislation initiatives that reached their peak in 1948, opened their gates to refugees by significantly increasing immigration quotas. The IRO could credit itself with the remarkably swift, almost complete solution of the largest refugee problem of the 20th Century. It was dismantled after less than four years of activity.

The Jewish refugees received aid from the international organizations, but Jewish organizations reached the scene as well, working together with UNRRA. The JDC and others stayed in Germany until the closing of the camps in late 1951. The JDC had been deeply involved, somewhat willy-nilly, in Zionist activities in Europe during the late stages of the war: Its participation ranged from financial support it provided the *B'richáh* (Flight) organization, through substantial support to the budget of the Jewish Agency, and indirect financing of various illegal *Ha'apaláh* immigration operations to Palestine.[30] Once JDC people arrived at the DP camps, they provided direct aid: They enriched the DP's impoverished diet, by topping the UNRRA rations by a few hundred extra calories a day. The JDC, together with the Jewish Organization for Rehabilitation and Training (ORT) and UNRRA, financed a school system for the camps' youth. Hundreds of teachers arrived from Palestine, armed with books and other educational material.[31] The JDC also purchased equipment for the camps, and imported machine shops from the United States, setting up the infrastructure for vocational training centers where DPs were taught trades. Also present were representatives of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS), who were helping Jews find destinations where new homes could be built—their older ones, now either taken or destroyed.

Also on the scene were the Jewish Relief Units from Great Britain. The Jewish community there, one with a long tradition

General Lucius D. Clay greets General Dwight D. Eisenhower at Berlin's Tempelhof Airport, upon his arrival at the 1945 Postdam Conference.

Greek Jews, Feldafing 1946. (Courtesy of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York).

Students at the ORT driving school, Landsberg, 1945-1946. (Courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv).

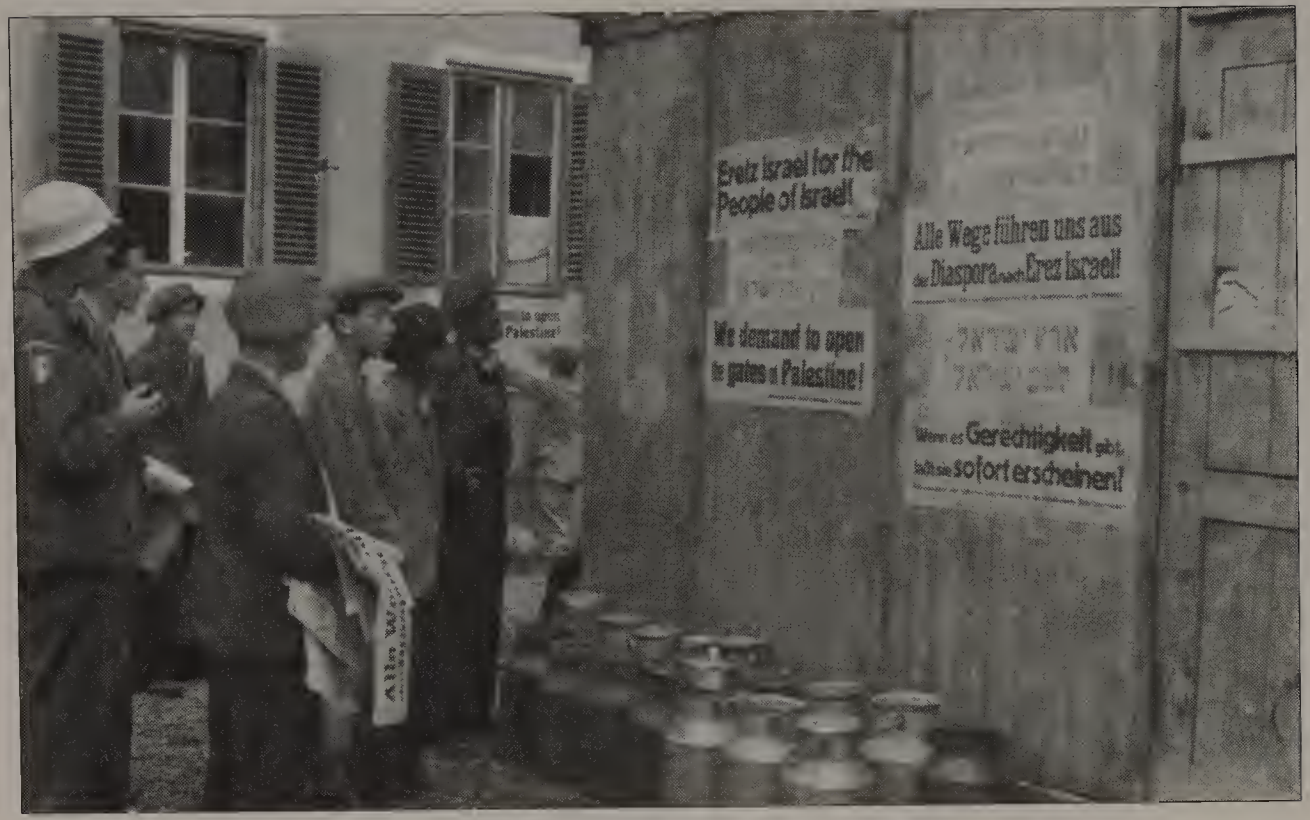
New residents arriving to the Zeilsheim DP camp, 1946 (courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv).

Jewish residents and police at the gate of a DP camp, most likely Feldafing
(Courtesy of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York).

Refugees arriving to the Nei Freimann DP camp, 1946 (courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv).

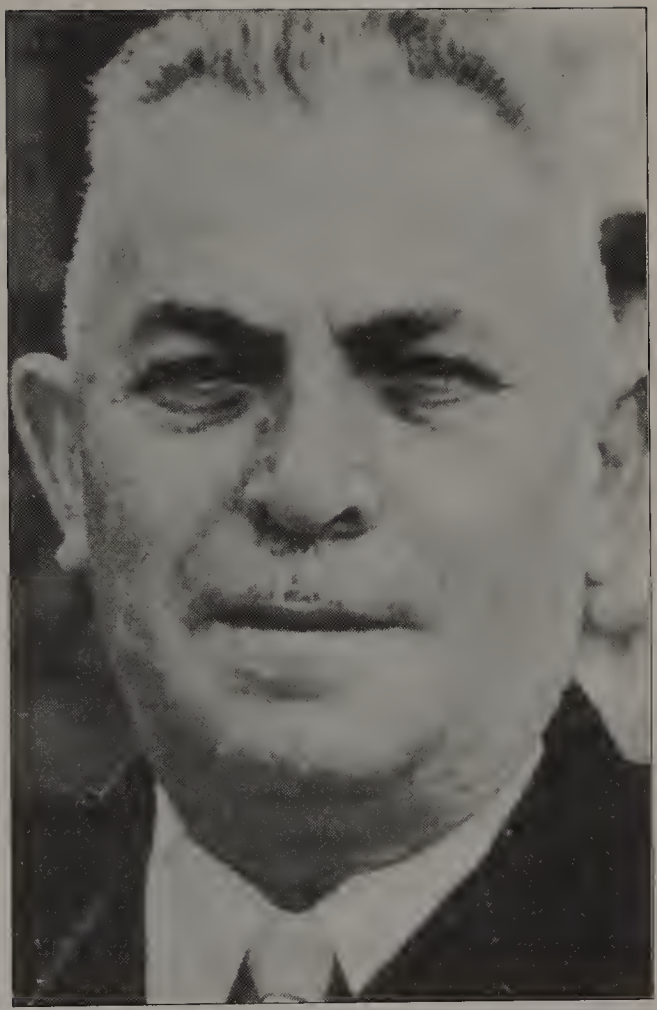
The center of a DP eamp (Courtesy of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York).

Entryway to the Bad-Reichenhal DP camp, 1946 (Courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv).


Eretz Israel for the People of Israel!
Alle Wege führen uns aus der Diaspora nach Erez Israel!
We demand to open the gates o Palestine!
sofort erscheinen!

Political posters in a DP camp, most likely Feldafing
(Courtesy of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York).

Dr. Chayim Yahil (Hoffmann), Director, Jewish Agency Munich Offiice. (Courtesy Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem).



Brigadier General Nahum Shadmi, Commander,
Haganáh European Theater.

Holocaust survivor Jewish immigrants at the entrance to the offices of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS), New York, 1946-1947 (Courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv).

Holocaust survivor Jewish immigrants at the entrance to the offices of the Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS), New York, 1948 (Courtesy of the Diaspora Museum, Tel Aviv).

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יידישע היסטארישע קאמיסיע

אין געטינגען

דער ריי

צענטראלער היסטארישער קאמיסיע

אין בערגן-בעלזן

JüD. HISTORISCHE KOMMISSION

GÖTTINGEN WEENDER LANDSTRASSE 6

The front page of the magazine published by the Jewish Historical Commission in the British Zone. (Courtesy of YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York).

of helping activity, began preparing for its post-war operation as early as 1942. Groups of volunteers were trained, and donations gathered. At war's end, these groups went to Germany, and were mainly active in Bergen-Belsen—in the British Zone. In 1946 alone, the 120-strong Relief Units transferred 120 tons of food, 65 tons of clothing, 32 tons of detergents, utensils and furniture, 6 tons of books, and 60 tons of shoes and medication.[32] The Jews in the DP camps were now receiving care.

With all that help coming from abroad, the basic needs of the Jewish DPs were satisfied. Helpers provided shelter (even if scant), food, and later employment and immigration possibilities. As this complex organizational fabric was consolidating around the Jewish DP, the first great drama was beginning to unfold: In the summer of 1946, Ben-Gurion's vision was about to come true. Multitudes of Jews, determined to leave the eastern territories, were moving westward, infiltrating the western occupation zones. Soon the trickle became a stream, and massive migration from the East flooded western Germany with Jews.

6 The Camps Fill Up

Far from the cares of the world…
The noisy diesel trains don't stop nearby
…paved with gold brick: Mahagonny!
Just yesterday they asked about you there.
In these troubled times you can find, in every city, millions
long for a better life.
Wise men set out for Mahagonny, the golden.
Where the booze is a bargain.
[…]
The world is so rotten.
But once you sit among the
People of Mahagonny,
Sipping your rum and coke,
Your skin will turn yellow like honey
[…]
Then off to Mahagonny.
Just yesterday they asked about you there.

Trinity Moses and Fatty the Bookkeeper
(Bertolt Brecht, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, 1927)[1]

Fewer DPs, More Jews

Ben-Gurion's vision of the American Zone as a springboard for Holocaust survivors from Europe to Palestine was not unrealistic. Many Jews who had found refuge in the eastern parts of the Soviet Union during the war were now making their way westward. Polish returnees, who tried to come home either from the DP camps or from the East, were facing crass anti-Semitism and pogroms in Poland, and from mid-1946 on, they began fleeing by the thousands. About 80,000 Polish Jews either went back to the camps in Germany, or embarked on a journey to Palestine through secret routes, guided by the clan-

destine *B'richáh* organization. Others, who now realized that the hunger and humiliation they had suffered during the war were not alleviated, were now looking for a new home. Thus, Jews from areas that the Soviet Union had conquered in Germany, from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and especially Poland, began flowing into the American Zone in 1946-1947, with the hope of finding a new place for a home—whether in Palestine or elsewhere. Many of them finally found themselves in Palestine; some tried to sneak in illegally by boat, risking their lives just to be mostly caught by the British Navy. Thousands were thus incarcerated in prison camps in Palestine and Cyprus, and freed only when the State of Israel would be established in May 1948.[2] Still others, who were lingering in the DP camps, would later be conscripted to the nascent Israel Defense Force (IDF) and taken to the battlefield. But before the particulars of this story unfold, it is important to get a bird's-eye-view of the huge population shift that the surviving European Jews underwent. The demographics, we shall see, are very telling.

All told, no more than about a third of the Jewish DPs would become Israeli citizens—a disappointing figure to the Zionist leadership. Many Jewish DPs registered for immigration to the United States (as Chava Rosenfarb's heroine was writing in her letter to Abrasha), and the fortunate among them did see the Statue of Liberty. Others immigrated to Canada, South America and Australia, some settled in Western Europe. This process was obviously anathema to the Zionists, who had hoped to bring all the DPs to Palestine, and then Israel. Several thousand DPs naturalized in Germany, trying to build a future for themselves there, in many instances rather successfully. Of these, the Zionists did not approve. Chayim Hoffmann (Yahil), who headed the Jewish Agency mission to Germany, and then became the first Israel Consul in Munich, would later mince no words upon reflecting on these:

> The 20,000 DPs still in Germany today not only desecrate Israel's honor, but also put the nation as a whole in danger. As long as a Jewish community exists in Germany, rootless and devoid of values, inherently parasitic and provocative in its practices, we are under the threat that savage anti-Semitism would once again become the main agent for a revival of a chauvinist Germany, whose venom would spread out from here throughout the Diaspora.[3]

But prior to reaching their final destination, this multitude of refugees and survivors, about 330,000 in number, were to reside in more than two hundred DP camps and assembly centers of different sizes and locations, that were opened mainly in the American Zone in 1946.[4] Of these refugees, about 20 percent would find shelter in cities. But for most DPs, the camps would be home—crowded, cold and rickety—for the next 3-5 years. Some would die there, not having ever arrived at a permanent home. Many would marry and have children, and even find work. Families coming from the East would run a more-or-less normal household, however miserable the conditions. A few individuals would take advantage of the chaos and disorder, and would make a small fortune (invariably gathered in questionable ways), securing a future for themselves. These events would take place under the baton of the *Z.K.*, with its subordinate regional and local camp committees, with the help of relief organizations and occupation armies, as well as of Palestine envoys, who would become deeply involved in the daily life in the camps, and in the planning of a communal future.

As a beginning, it is extremely important to paint a demographic picture of the Jewish DP population, for the reader to grasp the oddity of the situation at the time. The creation of this picture turned out to be rather difficult: The rate of population growth in the Jewish DP camps (through birth as well as migration) during those years was exceptionally high, and camp structure underwent rapid and frequent internal changes due to a

dense immigration pattern. The economic and political circumstances sometimes led the DPs themselves to stand in the way of UNRRA and the JDC attempts to gather census data. While different sources cite variable figures, one issue has never been in dispute, nor is a discrepancy found between the various (partial) estimates: The rate of change was dramatic—enormous population growth at first, and then a gradual decrease in the number of Jewish DPs, until the closure of the camps, the departure of relief organizations, and the dismantling of the office of the Advisor on Jewish Affairs in 1951.

Still, statistics may not always be an accurate reflection of the reality at the time, as at times only rough estimates could be obtained. No complete picture has thus far been compiled, which is not accidental: The Jewish DP population was shifting, and difficult to track down. A few thousand were fortunate enough to get out of the camps in between counts, and emigrate, whereas many were flowing in. An effort was made here to construct for the first time a reasonably complete picture, resulting in two types of demographic tables: The first, presented below, takes a "snapshot" approach to DP demographics, as it integrates data from a large number of surveys conducted in the camps at different points in time.[5] The second, presented in Chapter 10, in the context of an analysis of Jewish migration patterns, takes a "final count" approach; it estimates the total number of Jewish DPs, based on immigration data from target countries to which they went. To forecast, a conservative estimate of the total number of Jews who passed through DP camps in Germany, Austria and Italy during the years they existed (1945-1951) by no less than 330,000.

The "snapshot"-based demographic approach is more relevant to the present context, as it helps uncover the drama of Jewish population movement during the first post-war years. Its findings are presented in table 6-1 below:

Date	*Jewish DPs*	*Other DPs (excluding Jews)* [6]
End of Summer 1945	70,000[7]	1,096,000 in camps
Spring 1946	98,000-117,000[8]	
Summer 1946	130,000[9]	
End 1946	220,000-260,000[10]	931,400[11]
Summer 1947	up to 245,000[12]	718,200
Summer 1948	165,000[13]	604,300
Fall 1949	43,000[14]	374,800
End 1950	28,000[15]	246,400
End 1951	20,000[16]	120,900

Table 6-1: Snapshots of DP demographics, 1945-1951

The table reveals clear patterns of change over time in the Jewish and non-Jewish DP populations: During the early years, they exhibited opposite patterns. The general DP population in Germany kept dwindling steadily as a result of the repatriation process and resettlement program that the superpowers initiated. In 1946 alone, about half a million refugees and DPs were returned home from the American, British and French occupation zones of Germany.[17] Many of these returned to Poland, and since the massive increase in Jewish DPs in Germany that year was a result of Polish Jews migrating to Germany, the trends were reversed. In general, the Jewish DP population increased moderately at the beginning, growth rates became steep during 1946-1947, then stabilized and eventually shrank. The Jewish population of the camps, then, swelled dramatically, its makeup constantly changing and shifting, as immigration (and infiltration) waves into the American Zone grew. At the end of 1946, there were just under one million DPs in the Western areas,[18] over half of them originally from Eastern Europe—Poles, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Russians and Chechens; now about one-fifth of them were Jews, who resided in separate camps. The drama is best illustrated when one considers that the relative proportion of the Jews in the overall DP population grew from six percent in the summer of 1945 to more than a quarter of that population two years later.

It is important to note that the statistics come exclusively from the parts of Germany that were under Western control, where the Military Government gradually imposed DP registration, whose records are open to the public; we have no reliable data on the refugee population in the Soviet-held territories, although it is known that that the Soviets repatriated and resettled large populations, at times by force.[19]

The crowding of these Jews in the camps was later instrumental in the formation of the political engine behind the effort to establish the State of Israel, although the attempt to bring all of them to Palestine was unsuccessful. To an extent, this failure is related to the demographic shift in the Jewish DP population which we shall later see in detail: From a handful of young and single death-camp survivors, it now turned into a hodge podge of Eastern European Jews who spoke a medley of European languages.

Varied or not, 330,000 is a large number of people, all the more so when considered against three other relevant figures: First, it is more than half of the approximately 600,000 Jews living in Palestine in 1948, the time the state was founded. Second, the size of this population is about half of the 700,000 Jews who immigrated to Israel between 1948 and 1951.[20] Jewish DPs in Germany, then, constituted a sizeable "human reserve" for the Zionist movement. Third, the number of Jewish DPs in post-war Germany is more than half of the 600,000 to 760,000 Palestinian refugees, who either fled or were expelled from their homes in the cities and villages (400 of which were destroyed).[21] A common fate of persecution and of refugee life would forge a tight connection among all these, so strongly intertwined, that undoing it later would prove to be most difficult.

The *Z.K.* and the Authorities

Along with the increase in numbers and density, an important institutional change took place in the Jewish DP camps. The organizational structure of Jewish institutions operating around the DPs and their camps crystallized and gained power. The establishment of two regional committees—the *Z.K.* of Liberated Jews in Bavaria (about to become the *Zentral Komitet* of Jews in the American Occupation Zones of Germany, Austria and Italy), and the *Z.K.* of the British Occupation Zone, headed by Rosensaft—started the process of consolidation, strengthening ties between themselves and the Jewish Agency, the *Haganáh*, and the Zionist movement. The budgets of relief organizations (the JDC, ORT and UNRRA) grew, and these organizations were now able to tighten their grip over the camp committees, especially the *Z.K.*

With the creation of the *Z.K.* in Bavaria, its founders hastened to take action that would expand their sphere of influence, and link all Jews in the American Occupation Zone of Germany to them. To this end, they sent out circulars, letters and messengers to camps, large and small, where they were hoping to find Jews. Contact was thus established between the *Z.K.* and the camps, and an organizational hierarchy began to take shape. Regional committees were formed, ties with the relief organizations were formally established, and the consolidation process began.

"On Wednesday, August 14th, a *fach-shule* (vocational school) for youth will open in Camp Landsberg. A metal shop, auto shop and electrical shop are planned," wrote camp leaders, who were searching for engineers and technical trainers, for the *Z.K.* in Munich. "We also need a teacher for general studies."[22]

Information of various kinds began to flow between the camps and the center. "Very honorable comrades," wrote in broken Hebrew the workers of the Salzburg Center for the Surviving Remnant to their colleagues in Munich, "The bearer

of this document, Engineer Schindler, is the man who saved the lives of more that 1000 Jews [...] We have seen here how he was greeted by Jews who were liberated from the Plashow concentration camp. They welcomed him with flowers, held banquets in his honor, etc. [...] In short, he is a nice man, extraordinary. He is now on his way to Munich on private business. On behalf of the Austrian center, we request you to help him in every way needed and possible. His demands are not that great." Thus they wrote, and signed "With the blessing of liberated Zion."[23]

General elections, which strengthened the *Z.K.*'s status, were held only later. In the meantime, the *Z.K. Prezidium* assumed powers according to the August 8th, 1945 resolutions of the Assembly, in which delegates from Munich, Landsberg and Feldafing were elected to the *Zentral Komitet*. Dr. Grinberg remained chairman, and another Kovno Ghetto survivor, Dr. Shmuel Gringaus, became president.[24] Declaring itself the DPs' representative body, the *Z.K.* stipulated that it was to speak to the authorities in the name of all Jewish camp residents, and to take responsibility for their well-being and proper conduct. Grinberg and his friends who, before being elected, had not hesitated to write letters to the authorities on behalf of the DPs, now received public support for their action. From this point on, they put themselves behind the struggle for the recognition of Jews in Germany as a distinct national entity (which was instrumental in separating the camps); they demanded improved services, proper food and clothing, obtained employment, and insisted on the right of camp residents to run their lives autonomously.[25] The Military Government, while taking the *Z.K.* and its appeals seriously, did not rush to grant this organization an official recognition; it came only in September 1946.

The *Z.K. Prezidium* was divided into departments: Administration, finance, legal affairs, religion, education and culture, health, sports, immigration, missing persons and finally, a *historishe komisje* (historical department) to which we shall soon return. The work of the departments began at once, offer-

ing services to the DPs and engaging them in activities. The finance department, for example, managed the budget, obtained supplies and provisions from the authorities and established criteria for their distribution in the camps. The education department created schools, strove to obtain textbooks and reading material for schools and kindergartens, and recruited teachers. It also created libraries and organized cultural events. The administration department took upon itself the important task of establishing ties with the various camps, and distributed fliers such as this, sent just prior to the general elections in January 1946:

> Subject to the elections to the new *Zentral Komitet* of the entire American Occupation Zone in Germany, about to take place, we demand of all Jewish communities and centers to democratically elect local committees, and report to us the lists of elected members. Having received the protocols [...] we shall issue an endorsement of the *Z.K.*, to help you protect Jewish interests in the various institutions.[26]

Camp residents (some of whom were already in touch with the *Z.K.* and participated in its meetings) responded. They understood that this organization served them, and therefore accepted its authority, participated in the elections to local committees, and conducted their daily lives along the lines laid out by the *Z.K.* But responses varied: "Having received your letter addressed to the Jewish Committee in Sonthofen, we communicate You herewith following," the heads of the UNRRA delegation in one camp wrote to the committee in lame English: "There is no Jewish committee at Sondthofen. Only two Persons of Jewish nationality, both coming from Poland, are living here. We therefore give Your favor to them and after having it read by them send it back to You."[27]

The *Prezidium* now proclaimed itself at the service of one and all. Elections were held on a political party basis, and parties replicated the previous political structure of Polish Jewish

communities, although the relative weights were of course different now. Delegates were now elected to the First Congress of Survivors in Munich, held in January 1946. David Ben-Gurion himself came to Germany for this congress, and he gave an upbeat speech in which he linked the *Sho'ah* (Holocaust) with *T'kumah* (resurgence), the Jewish revival in Western Palestine. This linkage would play an important role in Zionist rhetoric in years to come. Indeed, the congress endorsed both a constitution for the DPs in Germany, and a Zionist program for the future. It condemned Britain for its White Paper policy that restricted immigration to Palestine, rejected the notion of returning Jewish DPs to their countries of origin and commended their migration to Palestine. Finally, it declared solidarity with the struggle of the *Yishuv* for statehood in Palestine. The newly elected *Z.K. Prezidium* now included Drs. Gringaus and Grinberg, as well as David Treger, Dr. Abraham Blumowicz, and Aryeh Retter.[28] All these would feature as lead characters in the sequence of dramatic events that would soon unfold.

Until September 1946, the *Z.K.* was not officially recognized by the Military Government,[29] but this did not prevent it from running and directing every aspect of life in the Jewish camps. Funds were obtained mainly from the JDC, which the *Z.K.* used to employ DPs and purchase goods for them. It also maintained unofficial contacts with the military authorities. "This is to inform you", wrote Captain Charles M. Matthews, Acting Adjutant to the Munich Military Censor, to the *Z.K.* "that your letter of 8 July 1946 requesting authorization for the use of Jewish and Hebrew in international mails has been forwarded to Headquarters, Civil Censorship Division for consideration."[30]

The *Z.K.* had dealings not only with the US Army, the JDC and UNRRA; it also communicated with international Commissions of Inquiry that were sent to the DP camps, with the Zionist leadership of Palestine and Germany, and with Jewish organizations. Its activities were coordinated with the *Z.K.* of the British Zone that Rosensaft headed (although the two

never united, due to Rosensaft's reluctance to do so). The *Prezidium* held regular meetings, discussing routine matters as well as issues pertaining to global Jewish politics (among them the plans to evacuate children). We have an excellent record of these: A strong desire to document and keep track of events for posterity has given us an archive with an almost complete set of the minutes of these meetings, all typed in Yiddish. The *Z.K.* also established it own organ, a newspaper named *Unser Weg* (Our Way), and thus with time, it handled all matters relevant to the DP's life. Not only did it supply DPs their food, clothing, shelter, health, employment and provided possibilities for study; it also defined their freedom of movement and set a cultural, and especially political agenda, which to a certain extent determined their future options.

In the British Zone, Rosensaft reduplicated the *Z.K.*, also with a newspaper, this time named *Unser Shtime* (Our Voice).[31] The forced removal from the stage of Miriam, Chava Rosenfarb's heroine (discussed in chapter 3), actually took place during the inauguration ceremony of the *Z.K.* in the British Zone. There, Rosensaft was everything: Chairman, leader and energizing spirit. He appointed his future wife, Dr. Hadassah Bimko, as his deputy, and kept all powers to himself. In Bergen-Belsen, his authority would prevail to the very end.

Commemoration and Politics

Among the most fascinating chapters in the Jewish DP saga, in this writer's opinion, is the story of the *historishe komisjes* set up by the *Z.K.* early on. The deep, powerful drive to commemorate those who had perished and to document Nazi crimes is of great interest; equally important, however, is the manner by which the DPs chose to remember the world that was now in ruins. It gives an opportunity to examine the way they tried to reshape a post-Holocaust Jewish and survivor identity, and to see their contribution to the way the tragic events are

engraved in that nebulous, evasive thing called collective memory. The rich documentary record left by the *historishe komisjes* is replete with clues on the motivation, conception, and action of these institutions, thereby allowing comparison with the way we think about the events today.

In October 1945,[32] a *Zentrale Historishe Komisje* (*Z.H.K.*) was founded in Munich, in the framework of the *Kulturamt* of the *Z.K.* A sister commission was established in the British Zone. Its task was "to create a complete collection of the material that might serve as evidence to the crimes of the Germans against the Jewish population of Europe during the occupation."[33] Its work was to be supported by a web of regional and camp commissions. Initially, activity was one of collection: Testimonies, pictures, "documents of historical value for current and future Jewish historians," ghetto and concentration camp songs and lore, evidence of Nazi crimes, and names of murderers.[34] The emotional content of these documents is striking. Bureaucratic jargon, at times written in broken Yiddish, cannot conceal the power behind a natural drive, shared by most human beings who had been victims of and witnesses to horrid crimes: A desire to give testimony and commemorate—as revenge, as defiance, as an act of self-assertion. Notable in these reports is a complete absence of political rhetoric of any kind, or talk about common future goals other than commemoration of the tragedy and exposition of its perpetrators.

Later, survivor activists also became interested in educating, mainly through a monthly magazine, *Fun Leztn Churb'n* (From the Recent Catastrophe), and in keeping record of the present. They began archiving current DP newspapers and magazines. Thanks to this effort we have an almost complete collection of journalistic material printed in the DP camps. The *Z.H.K.* was now ready to collect personal testimonies on a large scale. Attempting to reconstruct the Jewish communal past through vital statistics, the *Z.H.K.* created questionnaires in Yiddish and German and distributed them in the camps. Over 2,000 such

questionnaires were filled out during the first year.[35] These questionnaires are consistent with the expressed goals of the *Z.H.K.*, in that they ask about the distant Jewish past of the responder's community, about the Jews during the war and the Holocaust, and about the behavior of non-Jews.[36]

In its first year, the Commission collected hundreds of testimonies, folklore items and pictures; thousands of statistical questionnaires and documents from the Nazi period, and dozens of concentration camp songs.[37] The *Z.H.K.* also established contact with "Jewish scientific institutes in Palestine and other countries, especially with institutions that are concerned with research of our history." The enhanced Zionist sentiment in the camps, and with it the linkage between *Sho'ah* and *T'kumah* (Resurgence) that Ben-Gurion and others were engraving in the world's collective consciousness, is notably absent from the texts that the *Z.H.K.* produced.

From a Zionist perspective, an approach to collecting and documenting that was agnostic with regard to the question of a Jewish state harbored danger. At this fragile stage, ideology was all-important. As *Mossad* agent Ze'ev Schind had aptly sensed, the Zionists ought to be first on the market, so that they could try and shape a Zionist collective identity in the camps. Yet, the liberated Jews did not quite conform to this mold, as the community that began to exist in the DP camps had a multiplicity of agendas, all being Jewish in nature. Zionists planners became worried, but the *Z.H.K.* would have nothing to do with it. It was actually unique in its reluctance to affiliate itself with a particular political viewpoint, despite pressures to that effect: "We have said it and we repeat: No politics in our work. We wish to collect everything that is left for the Jewish People as a whole. We ask no one who comes to us which party he belongs to. Our collection is open to anyone who needs serious, solid work."[38] As a subsection of the *Zentral Komitet's* Culture Department, the *Z.H.K.* was the only part of the *Z.K.* that remained outside of Jewish politics.

This position obviously caused tensions between the *Z.H.K.* and other Jewish institutions. At the first two-day Conference of DP Historical Commissions, for example, some speakers, including *Z.H.K.* research director Dr. Friedman, kept to Commission matters, reviewing the achievements of the *Z.H.K.* and of the regional and camps commissions, and discussing matters pertaining to their work. Yet among the standard speeches, one stood out, as it stirred up a lot of discussion. Mr. Mark-Prager, a Palestine envoy, walked to the podium to give a talk entitled "Holocaust and heroism in the Jewish tragedy." In it, he proposed guidelines for the future work of the *Z.H.K.* He recommended that it emphasize the suffering of individuals, focus on the role of bystander non-Jews, and document "sparks of *kiddush ha-shem* (martyrdom) that made the future existence of Jews possible." He then concluded by saying: "Going around the DP camps I have seem that *She'erit ha-pleyta* is united in its dream of Palestine, and the camp population is united in its dream of Palestine immigration." He further demanded that the *Z.H.K.* pass a resolution that all documentary material be transferred to *Eretz Yisrael*. His demands were met with objections: Several speakers went to the podium to debate his proposals, and to oppose a resolution of the type he demanded.

We have evidence that the *Z.H.K.* in the British Zone was also distant from the political program of the Zionists. One affair is particularly telling. In the summer of 1947 it organized an ten-day long exhibit in Göttingen on the history of the Jewish settlement there. Exhibited were Jewish manuscripts, bibliographies, and art; evidence for the "destruction of the Third Temple"; anti-Semitic literature; Jews in Germany and in Göttingen (which included a well-researched list of Jewish professors and other personalities); and other materials of historical value. Most interestingly, the exhibit detailed 700 years of Jewish presence in Germany, with the current DP population depicted as a direct continuation of that glorious past.

It should be clear by now that actions such as the historical documentation of communities were perceived as running counter to the interests of those seeking to move the DPs to Palestine, because they hinted at the possibility that Jewish communities would exist in the same locations in the future. And this was not in line with the prevailing spirit. Perhaps as a result, the *Z.H.K.* was pushed to the sidelines. Its final report, written in 1948, while boasting achievements (e.g., the number of statistical questionnaires up to 6,938), laments the absence of support from the Zionists: "Incomprehensible to us," it says, "is the position of the Jewish Agency in Munich. Right after our establishment, we announced to the Agency that we are at their disposal. Up to now, no response has come."[39] Given the *Z.H.K.*'s explicit refusal to take a political stand, and given the difference between the way its leadership, composed entirely of Holocaust survivors, sought to represent the events, this organization was destined to remain on the sidelines.

The *Z.H.K.* story, then, is not one of popular success. The interest in it lies in clues it gives about ways to shape the memory of the Holocaust that survivors devised. Grounded in a clear conception of Jewish identity, which leaves room for multiple national agendas, the *Z.H.K.* leadership tried to create as broad a representation as they could. Their plan to commemorate the Holocaust, and their view of the right shape of collective Jewish identity, remained unchanged, despite the environmental pressure. The famous *Yad va-Shem* memorial institute in Jerusalem was not the *Z.H.K.*'s successor, obviously, but to my knowledge, small Holocaust Memorial Centers in several countries—established by ex-DPs in Australia, South America, and to some extent in North America—continued the line of historical documentation outside of the Zionist agenda started by the Historical Commission. Today, little of that remains.

'Aliyáh Emissaries in Disguise

Relief missions from the Jewish community in Palestine did not reach the DPs in the first few months after Liberation. Virtually the only Palestine envoys to come in contact with the survivors were Jewish Brigade men already in Europe. Jewish relief organizations from the United States and Britain arrived early, though, handed out packages, and tried their best to help the DPs in their new places, while emissaries of the Rabbis' Association criss-crossed Europe, removing Jewish children from refuges and monasteries and trying to take them to orphanages and *yeshivas*. Several Jewish Brigade men chose to stay in Europe and help (some even deserted for this purpose), yet no Palestine aid delegation arrived, and the only visitors from there were political activists. In an attempt to send help, the Jewish Agency began exerting pressure on the authorities to let the Jewish community in Palestine send an aid mission. Contacts with UNRRA had already been made, and now some lobbying was required to actually bring such a delegation to Germany. Eliyahu Dobkin, Director of the Jewish Agency's *'aliyáh* department, and the first Zionist official to visit the camps, wrote a request to UNRRA early on, in which he described the Agency's experience with refugees, and proposed that a mission called the Palestine Relief Unit be sent to the camps from Palestine, whose members would speak Yiddish as well as English. These would be teachers, physicians, nurses, social workers and other help professionals. He further proposed that when the Jews would be separated from other DPs, the envoys (whose salary would be paid by the Jewish Agency) would live in the camps with them.[40]

It took time for this proposal to become reality. In the fall, a group of future aid workers took a course to prepare for work with refugees.[41] And thus in December 1945, seven months after Liberation, a 20 member strong Palestine mission (all selected according to a strict political party key)[42] landed in Germany. Its arrival followed the authorities' approval, and was subject to

certain conditions: It was made part of the UNRRA mission and subject to the organization's supervision, and its size was limited to 20 members (although it would later grow to 150).[43] Led by Dr. Chayim Hoffmann (later Yahil),[44] the mission thus entered the occupation zones as the Palestine Relief Unit.

The goals that the Palestine mission set itself, however, were quite different. Dr. Hoffmann put it later in unambiguous terms:

a) To organize *'aliyáh* to Palestine both within and beyond the quota set by the British Government.
b) To concentrate all eastern European Jewry in the American Zone.
c) To provide Pioneer and vocational training to masses of refugees.
d) To give survivors political education, and prepare them for future appearances before the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry.
e) To help camp committees organize the DPs' life, especially in connection with Zionist education.

And so, although named "Relief Unit," and claiming "to work with the DPs until a solution is found,"[45] the Palestine delegation was geared first and foremost to organize the DPs for their anticipated immigration to Palestine. This goal could not be made explicit due to the severe restrictions on Jewish immigration set by the British government in Palestine. The mission thus had to leave Palestine under the guise of a relief unit.

Upon arrival in Germany, the mission began seeking for a proper mode of action. Achieving the goals Hoffmann set for it was difficult: Officially, the mission was working under UNRRA, but its Zionist goals often contradicted UNRRA's, as was evident in the children's affair.[46] Ways to circumvent this ogranization and to act autonomously had to be found. Envoys also had to find new ways to win the hearts of the DPs, who had

become rather suspicious of the political activists from Palestine who patronized them, and tried to "direct their activities."[47] Still, the Relief Unit was unable to provide what the DPs really needed, namely material aid. The mission's main concern, Palestine immigration, "was of no interest to them as a matter of concrete daily life."[48] Thus the Palestine envoys faced great difficulties at first. They moved around the camps, but since they actually lived elsewhere and enjoyed better conditions, their attempt to win over the DPs turned out to be difficult. At times, local committees were hostile to the envoys, as the "Zionist situation" in many of the camps—as it was termed in their parlance—was unfavorable.[49] Of that, a lot can be gleaned from the correspondence between these envoys and the Jerusalem office of the Jewish Agency. Take, for example, the Nei Freimann Camp near Munich. Dr. Jenny Taustein, a physician from Palestine, was coordinating education and sanitation there. "Material conditions were good, but the social situation was in trouble," Hoffmann reported, "as no Zionist work was allowed. Only 3 weeks ago did we finally break the wall," he added proudly. "Elections were held, and a fully Zionist committee was elected."[50] While preaching Zionism to the DPs, little aid was offered. As much as the envoys tried—and try they did—they had no resources. Thus they tried to give a hand in the search for missing relatives, helped DPs file repatriation applications, initiated agricultural training programs and educational institutions, and helped with the internal organization of the camps. But their job, first and foremost, was to work for the Zionist cause.

The Jewish Agency took the Germany mission most seriously: It opened an Envoys Department in Jerusalem, received routine reports from Dr. Hoffmann and his deputies, and tried to take charge of the situation. In a matter of months the Delegation—by now bigger, as another 15 envoys came to Germany in March 1946—had an established status as an aid organization as well as a leading Palestine mission. Other such groups, already in Europe since 1944, were *Mossad le-'Aliyáh*

Bet (the organization engaged in *Ha'apaláh*—illegal immigration), and *B'richáh,* in charge of the transfer of Eurpean Jews to ports where they could be sent to Palestine on boats commandeered by the paramilitary *Haganáh*. Among these groups was a degree of collaboration, as all aimed at a single, common, ultimate goal—the transfer all of the European Jews to Palestine.[51]

The envoys worked tirelessly to achieve their goals. Indeed, their effort and devotion won many hearts in the camps, especially since these organizers "were the only ones who had a sensible plan after that catastrophe," as Koppel Pinson, an American social worker who served in the JDC mission in Germany, wrote. They were also "organized, active and militant. They perceived anti-Zionism, or even a neutral position on Zionism, as threatening central aspects of their future existence."[52] The various missions from Palestine reinforced the thread connecting the survivors and the Zionist movement—a thread that Jewish Brigade men started weaving at Liberation—and thus obtained control of most camps with relative ease. Theirs was not an outstanding feat of welfare and rehabilitation—these were up to large and strong international organizations; they were noted, rather, for the hope they offered the DPs, the clear direction to which they pointed, and their actual physical presence, which helped raise many from the ashes. They carried out their mission with great devotion, but the feeling of belonging with which they infused the DPs clearly had a price: They had to go to Palestine, and nowhere else.

The good will and enthusiasm of the envoys, combined with the far-reaching political vision of their leaders, helped the Zionists forge a tight control mechanism in the camps. Camp committees operated on the assumption that most DPs, if not all, wanted to immigrate to Palestine. DP immigration committees were thus formed "in the camps, and on a regional basis, an assembly was selected from Munich to help our [Jewish Agency] immigration officials select and register potential immigrants to Palestine."[53]

But not everyone wanted to go to Palestine. Many wished to immigrate to other destinations, especially to the United States. Some acted clandestinely on their own, whereas others tried to organize. The latter, as noted earlier, were mainly remnants of the non-Zionist Jewish Labor Bund Party that had been very strong among Jews in Poland before the war, and which believed in the possibility of Jewish existence in the Diaspora that could maintain national, as well as cultural identity, and to a certain extent, political autonomy. During the War, the leadership of Bund was murdered systematically, first by the Soviets (after the Molotov-Riebentrop Accord allowed them to invade Eastern Poland), and then by the Nazis. The Soviets had banned the Bund Party (which had been founded in Russia) decades earlier, and so the party moved to Poland. Yet, when its Polish leaders who fled east after the Nazi invasion were captured by the Red Army, they were summarily executed. Of those who survived, many died in concentration and death camps and in the uprisings. Most of the survivors were the rank-and-file, working class Jews who sought to maintain the Bundist ideology in a new reality. These now contacted their comrades in the West—in Belgium, France and the United States—and tried to organize in the camps.[54] First, they conducted a census in the camps, and the membership was called to elect representatives to a general assembly. On June 1st, 1946, 150 former Bundists, *tsuzayte un tsushprayte in gants dajtshland* (dispersed and shoved aside all over Germany) as they described themselves in letters they wrote in Yiddish to their New York comrades, gathered in Camp Feldafing for a three-day conference, that was also attended by a representative from Western Europe. The conference addressed the problem of organizing Bundists in the camps, discussed a movement newspaper, and the future in general.[55] Subsequently, groups of Bundists in the camps convened and tried to obtain representation in the camp committees.

Such initiatives were not welcomed by the Zionists. Any intention to immigrate to places other than Palestine, especially when declared by an organized group, threatened to weaken their plan. Any group that resisted or even disagreed with Zionist ideology—the Bund, or *Freiland Lige*—was not allowed to gain a foothold in the camps' governing institutions. The decades old Zionist-Bundist rivalry, which disappeared in the war years (especially in the Warsaw Ghetto, where all movements participated in the uprising), now resurfaced. One Bundist described this in a sad letter, written in Hebraico-Yiddish, to a friend in New York, in which he compared the life of Bund members in the camps to the life of clandestine Jews in the Middle Ages:

> *Der gantser arum shviblt un griblt mit kibbutzim, snifim, mazkirut'n fun ale tsionistishe richtungen mi-kol ha-minim she-hu. Unsere chaveyrim (Bundist'n) lebn do vi di amolike anusim, vi di moranen in shpanyen!*
>
> All around us is abuzz with *kibbutzim*, branches and secretariats of Zionist movements of all colors. Our comrades (Bundists) live here like the *Moranos* once lived in Spain![56]

So this was the critical moment during the initial organizational phase, where the Zionists successfully gained total control over the DP population in the camps. The few non-Zionists, especially Bund party members, were immediately subdued. The Bund Party, one must add, is significant not because of its ideology, but rather, due to its role in forming an alternative Jewish fate that sought to retain a Jewish identity, though not necessarily through religion or in Palestine. Jewish identity, they contended, is not bound to Palestine—and later Israel—by necessity. In the camps, however, this was not possible. Journalist Moshé Ajzenbud, the only journalist to send regular reports from the camps that were written from a Bundist perspective, later wrote in an ironic piece published in the New York Yiddish Bundist press:

> In 1945, after all parts of the world had already been discovered, and the Colonies divided up among the powers, a tribe was found in the Hitlerian jungle. These were not black people, nor were they whites; they were skeletons covered with transparent skin, yellow as wax, large and hungry faces and eyes. Physically broken, their spirits crushed [...]
>
> Then, along came missionaries from the Holy Land, to gather the holy flock onto the path of righteousness, so that they could go to Heaven. These missionaries flew a blue and white flag over the camps, and so a Zionist colony was founded—called the Jewish camps in Germany, Austria and Italy. And as things happen in colonies in general, here too the Zionists rule strong, wishing only to do everything for Palestine's sake. In its name they act as lords of the camps. The Zionists have convinced the rest of the world that the survivors form one united front. But actually this front is full of rifts, a fact that could not be hidden from the camp press which branded thousands of Jews 'deserters' just for having signed up for immigration to America.[57]

In spring 1946, the camps were already organized logistically and politically, with independent committees that ran them, supported by UNRRA, the JDC and ORT, as well as representatives of the Jewish Agency who aided and supervised them along with the various pioneer movements. The stage was just about set for the show, to take place within two years. While not all participants quite understood this, the leadership was confident, and was busy planning ahead.

The Anglo-American Commission Convenes

The issue of DPs was not disconnected from international politics, and continued to preoccupy the powers. The Harrison Report and subsequent talks led the Truman Administration in Washington to demand 100,000 certificates for Jews from the British government. Britain's refusal to let these people in

threatened to sow seeds of conflict among the Western powers. Resolved to find a solution, the two governments established a joint Commission of Inquiry to reexamine the situation. The Commission, made up of six representatives of each power, convened in Washington on January 4th, 1946, and started its hearings with testimonies that were of considerable interest to the press. Groups and individuals that wanted to present their case to the Commission were requested to do so, and indeed, different experts, Jews and Arabs among them, took the stand. The Commission first heard Judge Earl Harrison, who, as an eyewitness, described the problem of non-repatriable DPs, and proceeded to demand that they be allowed to immigrate to Palestine. His testimony was followed by representatives of the Jews: JDC directors, economists who aired their opinions on the chances that Palestine's economy could successfully absorb multitudes of immigrants, and representatives of Jewish and Zionist organizations who told the story of the Zionist movement, talked about the Balfour Declaration, described patterns of Jewish immigration to Palestine, and critically reviewed the restrictive 1939 White Paper policy of the British government, which set quotas for Jewish immigration, too small in the Zionists' opinion. They described the horrors of the Holocaust and demanded that the civilized world pay its debt to the Jews by enabling them to establish a national home in Palestine. All the supporters of the Zionist cause came well-prepared. They testified along guidelines given to them by Zionist advisers, whom the Jewish Agency dispatched especially from Jerusalem. Economist David Horowitz, for example, prepared the experts who testified on economic prospects. Others future diplomats, like Eliyahu Epstein (Eilat), later Israeli ambassador to the United States and to Britain, and Arthur Lurie, a future senior Foreign Ministry official, lobbied directly with members of the Commission as well as its staff.[58]

The Arabs appeared next. They were less organized and prepared than the Jews, and their testimonies were not as effec-

tive as a consequence. Representatives of Arab-American organizations described the present and prospective dispossession of Palestine's Arabs by the Jews, and added birth-rate estimates, which purported to rule out the possibility of an eventual Jewish majority in Palestine. They concluded that if the Jews were to have a national home, they would have to expel Arabs from their homeland in the long run. The Commission also heard Jews who opposed Zionism; even Albert Einstein appeared and chided the British Empire for stirring up strife in lands under its rule. Much to the dismay of the Jews, he criticized the general notion of a state, and went on to comment on the insignificance of a future Jewish majority in Palestine.

Among the last witnesses was Dr. Zalman Grinberg, who, a week earlier, had been elected as chairman of the *Z.K.* in the American Zone in Germany, and had immediately come for a visit in the United States. He described his incarceration in Dachau, his subsequent liberation, and spoke about the survivors' dashed hopes for rapid recuperation. He concluded his speech with an appeal to the Commission to remove the "steel ring" surrounding Palestine.[59]

Upon concluding its sessions in Washington, the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry proceeded to Europe and the Middle East. Zionist envoys accompanied its sessions and tours regularly, their actions being a result of impressive strategic planning, precise organization, and coordination. In England, the Commission heard more Arab and Jewish witnesses—Professor Brodetsky on behalf of British Zionists, Socialist leader Harold Lasky, and several heads of Arab missions to the United Nations. Another witness was Dr. Nachman Steinberg, leader of the *Freiland Lige*, a Jewish "territorialist" movement that was trying to find territories other than Palestine where Jews could build autonomous settlements, and nearly convinced the Dutch government to create a Jewish colony in Dutch Surinam.[60] Having heard these testimonies, the Commission split into working groups, that visited different parts of Europe.

The high point of these—now deeply engraved as a major event in Zionist lore—was its visit in the DP camps in Germany, in which it sought to obtain an immediate impression of the state of the Jews there.

Here, too, thorough groundwork was done by the Zionists. Potential witnesses—residents of the DP camps—were prepared, in order to fortify and confirm the Zionist claim that all DPs wanted to immigrate to Palestine. Ben-Gurion had already realized the enormous value of the DPs. "If we succeed in concentrating a quarter of a million Jews in the American Zone," he said earlier, in November, upon returning from his first visit to the camps in Germany, "this would increase American pressure [on the British]—not because of the economic problem, that is not an important factor for them, but rather, because they do not see any future for these people anywhere except in Palestine."[61] A visionary who also knew how to act on his visions, he created special missions that traveled to the camps and maintained constant contact with the DPs, in an attempt "to convince Jews to stand united while facing the members of the Commission. The constant activity of Jewish Brigade men [...] now bore fruit as well."[62] The role of the missions, then, was to "organize a general delegation in each and every country, that would make our Zionist demand on behalf of the entire community [...] I met with all the Zionist leaders and with community leaders," said one of these envoys later, "and succeeded to unite them on this issue everywhere. We prepared materials for the Commission, wrote a memorandum, and selected the persons who would give testimony."[63]

This effort resulted in an impressive success. Representatives of the Anglo-American Commission of Inquiry, Sir Fredrick Leggett and Bartley Crum, were profoundly touched by the DPs' determination to immigrate to Palestine. Upon reaching the camps, they heard DPs testify, as intense demonstrations were being held outside the meeting room. Large groups of DPs marched "wearing the striped uniforms

they were forced to wear in the concentration camps. They stood at attention under our window. They carried a flag bearing the inscription 'Open the gates of Palestine!'"[64] At the same time, UNRRA personnel conducted a poll among 20,000 DPs about their preferred future. The results were stunning—96.8 % of the Jewish DPs declared they wished to immigrate to Palestine.

These results surprised even the Zionist organizers. Dr. Hoffmann, head of the Jewish Agency delegation, whose mission, among other things, was to prepare the DPs for the Commission's visit, later wrote that "we never dreamed of such poll results, and knew very well that they were not real. When we asked a Jew, known for his wish to go to the United States, why he voted for Palestine, he answered quite simply: 'My traveling to America is my own private business, but the Jews need Palestine.'"[65] The non-Zionist minority was disappointed at this success, realizing that the Zionist takeover not only strengthened the struggle for the opening of the gates of Palestine (which most of them no longer opposed), but the weakening of the struggle to open the gates of other countries to Jewish refugees. They also understood that this would be the beginning of a campaign that would de-legitimize Jewish immigration to the United States, Canada, Australia, South America and other countries. Moshé Ajzenbud (who later immigrated to Australia) wrote bitterly about this action in the Bundist press:

> In their propaganda among the Jews in the camps, they were not above anything. Any means were good to show the world that all Jews wanted to go to Palestine. This was seen most brutally during the Commission of Inquiry visit to the camps. They told the Jews: Go wherever you wish, no one will coerce you, but to the outside world, declare that you only want to go to Palestine.[66]

After these dramatic events, the members of the Commission proceeded to other countries in Europe and then to the Middle East. There, too, they heard Jewish and Arab leaders.

They arrived in Jerusalem in March 1946, met members of the Supreme Arab Committee, and then leaders of the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine, whose main demand was to establish a Jewish state, based on a plan formulated by the Jewish Agency. The committee heard Weizmann and Ben-Gurion, and finally, Moshé Sharett.[67] After all these hearings, finally a report was written, which made no substantive change in the state of affairs. One hundred thousand immigration certificates to be granted "as soon as possible" to Jewish victims of the Nazis were indeed recommended, yet at the same time, the Commission opposed a Jewish or an Arab state in Palestine, favored an extended mandate to the British rule, and called for equal treatment of Jews and Arabs in Palestine.[68]

The British government, however, was in no hurry to implement even the positive recommendations.[69] "The 1939 White Paper stays in effect, and the immigrant quota is quite lean: 1500 a month,"[70] wrote Chaim Weizmann. The controversy between the Truman Administration and the British government persisted, and in order to settle it, yet another joint committee was appointed. This one, known as the Morrison-Grady Committee, proposed to divide the territory into Jewish and Arab zones, and grant each limited sovereignty, while at the same time have two other zones left to British control: The Jerusalem area and the Negev desert in the south. This proposal was easy to kill, as it was expectedly rejected by both sides. No solution was found, and the demand to allocate 100,000 certificates to the Jewish DPs remained a point of controversy between the Truman Administration and the British government.

The British refusal to allow the free immigration of European refugees would later create an imperative for President Truman (who had been pressuring the British mainly as presidential elections were getting closer) to support the 1947 partition plan in the United Nations, and to later recognize the State of Israel. The Americans, too, did not hasten to open their own gates to DPs. The Administration did call upon Britain to

open the gates of Palestine to 100,000 survivors, but no special effort to open the gates was made at home. At the same time, all attempts to pass a Congressional act that would allow a large number of DPs (not necessarily Jews) to enter the United States, ended in failure.[71]

Infiltrees

Ben-Gurion's astonishing clairvoyance was once again demonstrated in connection with the DPs. Already in 1945, he dreamed of all Eastern European Jews swarming to the American Zone in Germany, *en route* to Palestine. This vision was about to become reality. Rumors about favorable conditions in the western zones of Germany, and harsh economic conditions in the east, were pushing refugees westward since the summer. Officially called 'infiltrees', they began to fill up already crowded camps. Initially, the Americans seemed concerned, as they threatened to close the borders separating the eastern and western zones. In some cases it was claimed that US Army units, especially those under General Patton, forced hundreds of Jewish refugees eastward, as they were trying to infiltrate to the West.[72] This news was made public in the United States at a time when the Soviet Zones were becoming communist, and as the Cold War was escalating. The American Military Government was thus encouraged to open the borders, and let more refugees cross the line. In October 1945, the Army received a (publicized) directive to welcome infiltrees, rather than reject them. They were to be concentrated in Assembly Centers, and the Jews among them placed in designated camps.[73] Ben-Gurion heard of this directive as he was visiting the camps. "Before I left the camps," he joyously reported to the Jewish Agency later, in November, "I heard that they had some decision, by some agreement in Potsdam, to let another 2 millions into the American Zone—Germans, Poles and others—and all of these until March 1st. On March 1st the borders will be closed. Rifkind and Nadich

suggested this to our people. I told our people not to wait for a miracle, but to have them enter tomorrow. Besides," he said, realizing that the Unites States' reluctance to take in refugees could again work in favor of the Zionist cause, "for America this will be the most important reason to demand their transfer to Palestine."[74]

The stream of refugees became stronger, with the help of the *B'richáh* organization that was sneaking Jews from the east. By mid-1946, another 50,000 Jews were added to the DP population in the American and British zones in Germany, Austria and Italy.[75] From July 1946 on, a series of dramatic events occurred, which was followed by a mass escape of Jews from Poland. Since Liberation, numerous anti-Semitic incidents had occurred there. About a quarter of a million Jews were living in Poland in June 1946; some had returned from their places of refuge in the East; others who had survived the death camps had returned to look for their old homes.[76] Many Jews who returned to Poland encountered hostility and violence, some were even murdered by anti-Semites. Official government statistics cite 351 Jews murdered between November 1944 and the end of 1945.[77] The incident at Kjelce, on July 4th, 1946, was an unprecedented high point. An eight-year old Polish boy went missing, and upon his return home, made up a story about having been kidnapped by Jews. This brought about serious rioting, during which dozens of Jews were murdered, and many others injured.[78] The mild, even forgiving, reaction of the authorities and of the Catholic church made many Jews realize that their lives in Poland were in danger. This led to a sudden mass-exodus of Jews from Poland during the second half of 1946, largely aided by *B'richáh* people, who led the escape along different routes.[79] A majority of Poland's Jews abandoned it during a short period of time. The exact numbers will never be known—like many figures quoted here, this one, too, is controversial. Some estimates put the figure as high as 140,000.[80] Either way, the important fact is that most Jews who left Poland in that short

period of time—about 70,000—went to the western occupation zones in Germany.[81]

The American and British military authorities stood helpless, watching this gigantic stream of refugees. They did not want to close the borders, nor could they. Yet they could not solve the new problems that were created either: Thousands of infiltrees now crowded the camps. No solution was in sight: The new refugees could not immigrate to the United States, and were not let in elsewhere (let alone Palestine). On the one hand, Truman's preferential policy had already come into effect on December 22nd, 1945, but this policy resulted in no more than 13,000 immigrant visas per year for DPs from Germany—a ridiculously low figure considering the million DPs still residing in Germany at the time, and the pressure on the Military Government that was now caused by the Jewish infiltration from the east. On the other hand, very few Jews immigrated to western European countries, or to South America and Australia, whereas the number of Jews headed for Palestine remained most limited. No escape hatch was found, and the infiltrees were stuck in the American Zone, massively crowding in the camps, creating a squeeze that was not to be relieved in any obvious way. The incoming refugees, plainly, had no place to go. Many more were now added: Infiltrees from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Hungary were flooding the camps, forcing UNRRA to open new ones. The number of Jewish DPs in the western occupation zones was thus rising steadily, until in 1947, the Jewish camps held about a quarter of a million residents, exactly as Ben-Gurion had predicted.

7 Living Out of Suitcases

"What is going to happen?" they would sometimes joke.
"Why, we'll just send the children to Palestina."
"Where is Palestina?"
"Across the sea, beyond the dark mountains."
"And what shall we do there?"
"You will be pioneers. Pillars of fire."
[…]
"And why aren't YOU going?"
"I," said the clerk, "am already corrupted."

Aharon Appelfeld, *Michvat Ha-'or*
(The Searing Light, 1980)[1]

Crowding

A precious few could afford a reasonably comfortable life in the camps. Most DPs were needy and subject to dire conditions, as they were underfed, and lived in crowded and filthy accommodations. The streams of infiltrees, first from Poland and later from Romania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, forced the US Army and UNRRA to go beyond the expansion of existing camps, and to construct new ones.[2] In the Jewish camps, the 1946-1947 wave of immigration to Germany and Austria marked a substantive shift in social fabric and composition: These communities were now becoming terribly overcrowded shantytowns, inhabited by entire families from all over Europe. Journalist Moshé Ajzenbud, in his Yiddish article *Kh'hob gezen Ulm* (I have seen Ulm) which he published in the Paris Bund paper *Unser Shtime*, described it thus:

> The largest number of camp Jews is now concentrated in Albert Einstein's birth place [over 6,000 Jews in seven camps in Summer 1947],[3] an ordinary German town on the bank of the Donau River.

> The wind stirs paper bags and bits on the street. On a wall, a notice is posted: Place boxes here! Collection for the United Jewish Fund! In other words, this is a Jewish camp.
>
> [...]
>
> Eleven families with children live in one large room. There is no single wall, not even a curtain to provide some privacy. Green beds are standing there, for everyone to exhibit his family life to the public.
>
> I was ashamed [...] Ashamed as a human being [...] Ashamed for all the young girls having to undress in front of everyone, for all the young women forced to sleep with their husbands in those narrow green beds. Ashamed that, four years after Majdanek, eleven Jewish families wallow in a stable.[4]

Ulm was but one example of many. Overwhelmed by the huge flood of refugees, the military authorities and UNRRA were quite helpless, housing the incoming Jews wherever possible:[5] In *Kaserne* (brick barracks), that only recently had sheltered the Nazi army, in provisional wooden-shack compounds that UNRRA erected, in urban residential buildings that were confiscated from Germans, or in expropriated parts of villages. All of these came as additions to the ex-Nazi concentration camps, work camps and POW compounds that had become DP Assembly Centers upon Liberation. Consider this description, written by a Palestine Relief Unit envoy to her directors:

> Camp Ziegenhein shelters 2058 people, 630 of whom are children under 18. The camp resembles a concentration camp (*K.Z.*) with its flimsy shacks and double barbed-wire fence. It was built during the war to incarcerate Polish and French POWs [...] Living conditions there are extremely miserable, probably the worst in Germany [...] People live crowded, several families often sharing a single room. The weather is extremely cold and there must be constant heating. The wood for heating is moist, constantly producing smoke, and no decent sanitation can pos-

> sibly be maintained [...] The latrines are not indoors but at some distance, and you can easily imagine what camp grounds look like, as children must venture into the dark and the mud at night.[6]

Refugees packed the camps beyond capacity. Camp Wetzlar, for example, was meant to house some 3,500 people, but was instead inhabited by 4,300. "Crowding," wrote envoy Malka Shapiro to her superiors in Jerusalem, "is terrible, resulting in miserable hygiene. Several hundreds could possibly be transferred to another camp, no worse than this one, but they refuse to leave. There is a certain fear of separation from acquaintances and old friends. They say, 'This is where we wish to stay until we go to Palestine.'"[7]

The terrible situation in the camps led a senior JDC official, Leo Srole, to submit his resignation. Crowding was as extreme as was the sense of instability. But the stressful existence of the refugees served the Zionist interest. Ben-Gurion had made no secret of his intention to try to use it to pressure the Americans, so that they, in their turn, would lobby with the British for an increase in the number of Palestine entry permits for Jews.[8] Another international mission, the 1947 UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), was set up in an attempt to consolidate a solution to the Palestine question. UNSCOP visited the camps, and like its predecessor, the Anglo-American Commission, heard testimonies of DPs who again had been prepared in advance by Palestine envoys, this time with an emphasis on the degrading conditions to which they were subjected. Major Abraham Hyman, Special Assistant to the Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the US Army and an acute observer of the drama as it unfolded, would later note in his memoirs that "the Jewish Agency for Palestine viewed the congestion [in the camps] as advancing its political aims, and was unhappy with Srole's threat to resign over the crowding of Landsberg camp. It would have preferred that the accommodations in the camp [...] deteriorate further."[9] It was quite obvious, he wrote, that the "shocking con-

ditions" and crowding would catalyze the establishment of the Jewish state. Once again, planners correctly grasped the value of human suffering as a currency in the international political arena, and used it efficiently.

Apprehensive at the growing number of refugees from the Soviet-dominated East, the Americans tried to stop the infiltration into the western occupation zones. The borders, however, could not be sealed hermetically, due to both technical obstacles, and a critical press at home that had already disapproved this move in the past. The Military Government was thus stuck between a rock and a hard place: On the one hand, the flight of Eastern Block citizens to the West was politically beneficial to the United States, as Cold War tensions were growing; on the other hand, all Assembly Centers and refugee and DP camps were filled beyond capacity, hence the Military Government was in no position to absorb more refugees. Thus, a directive was finally issued on April 21st, 1947, barring the entry of new infiltrees to the western zones. It forbade camps and Assembly Centers from providing food and aid to new and unregistered dwellers.[10] The flight from the East, that had reached its peak in 1947, slowed down, and finally stopped.

At this point there were 732 camps and Assembly Centers in Germany, 200 of which were exclusively for Jewish DPs.[11] Camps varied in size and shape, and were scattered throughout all five districts of the American Zone in Germany. Additional space was obtained as the authorities confiscated German public buildings—schools, hospitals and recuperation centers—and turned them into residential quarters for refugees.

The intensified Cold War set new constraints on the western powers in Germany. New measures were taken in the western zones, at times in breach of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. The British and American occupation zones in Germany were unified, and became known as Bizonia; the Marshall Plan was put into effect. Eventually, currency in the West would also be changed, which would bring the Cold War to its first major crisis.[12]

Against this background, the DPs were just another matter that the Military Governors were supposed to handle, never gaining top priority. First under General Joseph T. McNarney, and later with General Lucius D. Clay, the chief concern of the Military Government was the social and economic rehabilitation of a destroyed and destitute Germany. Thus, out of 444 pages in his memoir of this period, General Clay devotes only two to the DP issue.[13] The rehabilitation system that the Allies created was complex and difficult enough to manage, and thus the DPs were administered by the Military Government, but mostly by the welfare organizations who, in fact, handled everyday life in the camps almost exclusively. Cold War considerations now forced UNRRA to be dismantled. To replace it, the United Nations founded an International Refugee Organization (IRO). It would be the IRO which, from this point on, would be in charge of the wellbeing of all World War II DPs until it, too, would come to its end in 1950, together with the closure of the DP camps.[14]

Jewish DPs continued to be cared for by the JDC. This organization was carrying an increasing burden from 1947 on, as a consequence of the decree that banned new refugees from obtaining DP status. While Allied support to these refugees stopped, the stream of Jews still continued, and thus the JDC took upon itself to care for newly arrived ones who were not cared for by UNRRA. The JDC in Germany, by a report it issued on September 30th, 1947, was caring for an impressive number of 132,379 Jews, who resided in 55 camps, 120 towns and villages, 12 Palestine pioneering projects, 9 orphanages and 38 hospitals and sanatoria.[15]

Despite all the care and support, the magnitude of misery was beyond belief. All this effort, money, and good will could not solve most of the problems. Camp residents suffered not only from acute crowding, but also from malnutrition. In 1947, a DP in Germany was still receiving a meager 1,900 calories per day; DPs in Austria had even less—1,500 calories per day. On top of this poor nutritional value, as welfare workers reported,

the food was also of very poor quality, containing far too many carbohydrates, and not enough protein and fat. Under such circumstances, it is easy to imagine how a black market thrived in the camps, and throughout Germany. An increase in per diem caloric intake (up to 2,230), and better food, were only evident at the end of 1948. Jewish DPs were a bit luckier, as they received an extra 600 calories a day that the JDC provided.[16] To them, food rations were distributed on a sliding scale, according to occupational categories stipulated by camp committees that controlled food distribution.

In the midst of all of this poverty and crowding, camp dwellers somehow managed to maintain a human face. They ate, worked, loved, hated, were happy and sad, watched plays and listened to music. Many were busy searching for lost relatives, some were active in black market trading, trying to get rich, usually to no avail. And some were even busy avoiding the police. But more than anything else, the Jewish DPs were starting families. After years in which the European Jewry was destroyed and depleted, not bringing a new generation into the world, the Jewish camps in Germany recorded extremely high birth rates. In 1947, the JDC was registering 750 newborn babies per month in the camps, and about one-third of the women of child bearing age were either pregnant or had just given birth.[17] The Jewish survivors in Europe were getting back to life.

A Jewish Archipelago

The hardships in the camps abounded, yet it was still possible to conduct a full life there. And, although it is quite difficult to penetrate the mind of a group through its paper trail alone as this book tries to do, it is fairly clear that the Jewish DP community was mostly preoccupied with mundane matters. It conducted its life in a manner quite detached from the surroundings. During the first post-war years, the Nüremberg trials were conducted, Nazi leaders were imprisoned and hanged, Germany

experienced de-Nazification, rehabilitation, currency changes, and in the background, the Cold War was escalating. The Jewish DPs, however, seem to have had little taste for high politics and international schemes. Of much more concern to them were the minutiae of everyday life: They mostly focused on the procurement of goods, while trying to find solid ground for a safe future. The Jewish camps were thus almost entirely disconnected from events around them. Members of the group *Kibbutz Nili*, to take one example, were allowed to conduct their agricultural training on a farm that previously belonged to Julius Streicher, former editor of the rabidly anti-Semitic *Der Stürmer* and a most notorious Nazi criminal, who was tried and hanged at Nüremberg. So preoccupied were group members in learning how to milk cows and feed chickens in preparation for *'aliyáh*, that they did not even bother to follow the deliberations of the International Tribunal, which took place just as their *kibbutz* was forming on Streicher's land.[18] Five hundred other lucky Jewish youths were admitted to academic studies in German schools, first at the University of Munich, and later elsewhere.[19]

The Jewish DP camps, then, constituted a society within a society: The general DP community did not engage with the German society that was pulling itself together and seeking a new future, with the help of the Allies. Contacts with the surroundings were mostly related to black market transactions, or during German police raids on the camps that occurred in 1947-1948 (as German self-control over local government was reinstated). These few encounters, particularly the raids, left little desire on the part of the DPs to mingle with Germans, as they reawakened old traumas from which they were just beginning to recover. Many were frightened by the rising frequency of these raids, and as a consequence, the number of DPs interested in remaining in Germany was rapidly declining. The Jewish DP was dissociating himself from Germany. On the other hand, the social fabric of the camps themselves, as well as inter-camp connection, was becoming thicker and more solid. And so, with the help of the JDC and

Palestine envoys, and with the *Z.K.* at the wheel, a kind of archipelago was emerging: The camps, which first were nothing more than islands where Jewish refugees gathered at random, were now becoming an intricate, complex, rich and highly structured system of interconnected centers, tightly intertwined culturally and socially, despite the small size of each, and the relatively large geographic distances between them.

This strange framework embraced nearly all aspects of life. It sustained its own cultural, political and socio-economic existence, family life, theater, sports and music, history and even employment for some (mostly in public works). All these activities were tightly controlled by the committees, with a clear chain of command from the *Z.K.* and its various sections at the top, down to regional and local camp committees. Budgets and resources were dictated by the Military Government, UNRRA, and the JDC, but the self-government that the Americans instituted granted the committees a lot of power and almost complete control over most matters that concerned the individual. The biggest problem was employment: The economic crisis in Germany allowed only a few to find work outside, and as a result, most DPs were idle, which did not help to raise morale or contribute to the social scene in the camps. To improve on this situation, as well as train DPs so that they would be better equipped for the labor market, both the JDC and the Jewish Agency intervened. The JDC founded small factories with machines that were brought from the United States, whereas the Jewish Agency opened workshops and instituted professional apprenticeships (mostly with JDC funds). Thus vocational training was given to some fortunate DPs, and jobs were created, yet there was no comprehensive employment schema.

This limited labor market (services, education, small industries) was first in the hands of the welfare organizations that created and supported it. Gradually, however, control was handed over to the *Z.K.* and the Jewish Agency. This painstaking process took place thanks to the efforts of Palestine envoy

Yehoshua Levy, an Agency planner and economist, who sought to increase the number of jobs, and find ways to pay DPs an equitable salary.[20] To this end, he first insisted on exposing the true unemployment record: In his opinion, and contrary to UNRRA reports that 52 percent of the camp Jews were employed, most DPs were loitering jobless. Levy therefore proposed a comprehensive job plan, based on a single, centralized employment agency common to all Jewish organizations in Germany. In February 1947, the JDC, the *Z.K.*, and the Jewish Agency signed an agreement that established a central committee on employment, with a representative from each organization.[21] The close cooperation between this committee and the Jewish Agency and the *Z.K.* (whose leaders had by then visited Jerusalem through the Agency's invitation and funding),[22] granted these organizations total control over the small DP labor market. This fact would later prove vital to the effective draft drive that the Zionists conducted in the camps at the time of the Israeli-Arab War in 1948, and the establishment of the State of Israel, as it would give the *Z.K.* effective means to impose its will on the DPs.

Camp committees and the *Z.K.* also controlled the DPs' everyday life. They were authorized to grant travel passes through the occupation zones and had power to issue documents. Charged with food distribution, it was up to the *Z.K.* to determine the category of each DP with respect to the rationing of food and supplies. In the face of malnutrition, this was, of course, an all-important decision. Food rations were set according to workplace. The linkage between food and workplace made certain jobs more desirable than others, and gave the *Z.K.* even more power, as it was the exclusive body to assign workers: "I worked in the forestry section for 18 months," writes DP Izrael Kinrys in a letter to the Feldafing Camp *Prezidium*, "and was then assigned to the sanitation detail. I now wish to return to the forestry unit and kindly request your favorable response." *Prezidium* decided that he would be "assigned only to the work

place chosen for him by the employment section."[23] DP Jacob Gordon, however, requests reassignment to a higher category of food rationing: "I have been working for two years in the health and sanitation detail. Please sign me up for category 2." "Two rations with cigarettes" was the decision.[24]

The committees also issued affidavits, especially for immigration purposes:

- This is to confirm that Mr. Lipman Chayim, born 16.6.1905 in Łodz (Poland), is a resident of D.P. camp 5 at Bergen-Belsen, Block 56, Z. 10. On his way from Bergen-Belsen to Feldafing Mr. Lipman lost his identity card. We therefore ask the authorities, to lend Mr. Lipman every help on his way back to Bergen-Belsen.[25]
- This is to certify that Mr. Chajat M. is the leader of the camp's shoe-shop since May 1945. Since his liberation he is an inmate of the DP Assembly Center Feldafing.[26]
- This is to certify that Mr. Borenstein Mendel is a resident of the DP Center Feldafing, and was a racial persecute. Mr. Borenstein was never a collaborator with the German authorities. To the best of our knowledge Mr. Borenstein does not belong to any political party.[27]

General elections for camp committees were held, as per the orders of the Military Government to that effect. There were power struggles over control in the Jewish camps, but these were between the Zionist parties. The non-Zionists were simply ignored. These struggles took place much to the chagrin of most DP leaders, who were initially interested in the formation of a Uniform Zionist Union, one that would embrace under one umbrella all DPs who identified with any Zionist party. Yet, certain envoys from Palestine had a different agenda. Ben-Gurion, for his part, mostly viewed the DP as critical for the Zionist enterprise as a whole. The *Yishuv* political parties, by contrast, saw the voting potential the DPs held for elections in the future Jewish state. Hence, they regarded them an important human

resource that could later be used to fortify their power base in Palestine, and each party rushed its representatives to Germany. Politicization of this sort went against the will of the DP leadership, whose desire to create a Uniform Zionist Union failed, after a short struggle between the DP leaders with *Yishuv* political party activists. Unity was thus replaced by partisanship and sectarianism.[28]

The struggle between the unity-seeking DP leadership and the political envoys from Palestine illustrated not only the importance of survivor DPs to the *Yishuv* in Palestine; it also shows the power that *Yishuv* envoys had in the camps, as they were able to interfere with their internal affairs and overrule the DP leadership. Palestine envoys indeed used their power, and they did not shy away from being involved in virtually every aspect of the social and political life in the camps. Importantly, while the current rendition is based on new documents of partisan conflicts in the camps I found in the DP archives, the facts are not controversial. The standard Zionist interpretation of the events is very similar.[29] There were real political tensions (which the DP leadership initially tried to avoid, yet to no avail), and the highly politicized atmosphere became increasingly loaded, and in one case—in Innsbruck, Austria—even resulted in the killing of a Labor envoy from Palestine by oppositionists who were members of the right-wing *Beitar* movement.

The common DP was not as preoccupied with partisan politics as the political activists. This can be gleaned when one ventures into the world of the individual in the camps. A perusal of posters and leaflets distributed during the elections for camp committees in 1947, for example, offers us a vivid pictures of everyday life. The writers of these leaflets were obviously aiming at issues that preoccupied voters, as each party sought to convince the DPs that it, and no other, would improve their present and future lot. And although party platforms did address global political issues, and—how not—the Zionist question, the DPs were primarily more concerned with mundane, everyday

affairs, and less with high politics. This is precisely what one would expect—that a needy, homeless population would be preoccupied with basic questions: How can we get some more now? Where can we go in the future? Thus, although the political struggles were largely party based, election campaigns naturally revolved more around local issues, rather than the grand scheme of things. It is thus instructive to look at campaign materials that were used.[30]

"We wish to rid the committees of the shameful legacy of the *Judenrat*," read a 1947 leaflet of the right-wing Revisionist Party, whose candidates ran for a committee post in Camp Feldafing, "and adhere to the gold chain of small town communities [...] Every official must know that he is there to serve the people, and not vice versa [...] We seek to establish an open economy, in which everyone would know to what goods and products they are entitled [...] Where no tricksters or parasites would flourish." They concluded with the following exclamation: "To the Jewish masses! Do not be misled by fancy terms such as Progress and Reaction! Decide for yourselves what reaction has meant so far, and what meaning you find in progress."

The advertising of other parties was not different in the way it appealed to the public. The National Block tried to instill fear, sending a clear warning: "Do not forget what happened to us just recently!" they wrote. "Because of [committee] seats, both Zionists and anti-Zionists came through in the last elections!" They then sported an extensive list of candidates, and called upon camp residents to vote for them in protest against the feeble existing order: "Thanks to the list we have created, it is no longer possible to sell the interests so vital to every Feldafing resident. Our candidates will not compromise, and will concern themselves solely with the good of the camp. Do not be swayed again by those who have already misled you. Do not vote for any of the old committee members!" Elsewhere, as well, groups who were not elected tried to instigate residents against the weak and corrupt regime: "*A shande!!* (shame)"

shrieked a poster of the *blok fun umpartayishe yidn* (non-partisan Jewish block) in an Ulm satellite camp, "on Sunday all Jews turned out to vote. Realizing that they cannot lead you by the nose, committee members [...] pulled a dirty trick and tore up the election. They made a mockery of our most vital interests, our pain. They do not shy away from the vilest of acts, just so that they can hold on to their seats [...] Jews! Enough! Clear up the social atmosphere of our life! Help put an end to corruption, demoralization and street gangs. No more room for shady characters. Jews, remember this!"

And a member of List no. 3 used a literary image taken from the writings of Mendele, a well-known Jewish writer: "Jewish voters! Do not let all party seat-holders terrorize you. They would very much like to keep riding the mare of the masses, all skin and bones." The non-partisans knew what they were talking about. Like the Bundists, they had no chance to win the election. "We have the honor of requesting the committee to let our representative into the elections committee," their representatives later wrote to the Jewish Committee at Camp Rochelle, and signed "respectfully." "Not to let them!" jotted someone in response at the bottom of the page.[31]

While the masses focused on mundane issues, their elected representatives appeared more interested in world politics. Witness the Second Convention of Holocaust Survivors in the American Zone, held in March 1947 with camp representatives, Jewish Agency envoys, as well as Palestine activists of different political colors: The Convention began as a meeting of camp representatives, with an intention to discuss problems in the camps; yet the meeting quickly turned into a political debate about the future of Palestine. The local leadership, which had already changed in part (as Dr. Grinberg had immigrated to Palestine), was by now completely politicized, and composed of the whole spectrum of *Yishuv* political parties, left to right, religious and secular, labor Zionists and Revisionists. Only the non-Zionists were left unrepresented. Marginalized, they would from

now on have no say in camp politics. The groups of non-partisans, as well as the Jewish Labor Bund, were steadily shrinking as their membership would join the Zionist left in order to get some kind of representation. A few kept a clandestine political existence that mattered little, "like the *Moranos* in Spain," as the letter to New York read. "The *Z.K.* must express its bewilderment," an official would exclaim in response to a query from New York regarding Bund Party in the camps. "For all we know, such an organization does not exist among current day Surviving Remnant."[32] Thus, with the establishment actually denying their very existence, former members of the non-Zionist Labor Bund Party were shoved aside, and their call for a struggle to open the gates of all countries, not just Palestine was muted.[33] The Zionists prevailed, passing several important resolutions in the Second Convention of Liberated Jews in Bavaria: For the establishment of a Jewish state (97 in favor, 45 abstained); for an undivided Palestine (72 in favor, 90 abstained); and for a socialist state in Palestine (81 in favor, 51 against, 25 abstained).[34]

While elections for local camp committees were allowed, in fact mandatory in all the DP camps of the American Zone, the Military Government prohibited political activity.[35] The Governor wanted the DPs to run their own lives on a democratic basis, but banned politics, which were effectively permitted only in the Jewish camps. This order, in the form of a directive issued by General Huebner, McNarney's chief of staff, explicitly stated that "the organization will not engage in political activity of any nature, but will be a welfare, charitable and relief organization, carrying out functions similar in type and supplementary to those performed by UNRRA and associated voluntary agencies."[36] Yet the Jews enjoyed special treatment, as was evident by the official recognition that the *Z.K.* received as the representative of the Jewish DPs in the American Zone. Indeed, this directive soon became a "forgotten document" that ended up in the archive.[37] Thus, while the *Z.K.* was authorized to han-

dle welfare, special needs of Jewish DPs, rehabilitation and relocation, it was politicized, and deeply involved in international matters.

Politicization was not the only activity that was not to the liking of the authorities. The Historical Commission (*Z.H.K.*) engaged in the identification of DPs who had served as *Kapos* in concentration and death camps. Not wanting to turn Jews over to the Military or German Courts, the *Z.K.* set up internal tribunals. Major Hyman describes an event he witnessed at Camp Landsberg, where "the cry *'Kapo!'* pierced the air. Within seconds the people streamed out onto the camp's public square and seconds later I saw a man bathed in blood. The camp police rushed to the scene, freed the man from his assailants and spirited him away to safety. I was curious to learn the charges against him and something of the quality of DP camp justice, and arranged to attend the trial. The ex-*Kapo* was accused of having beaten fellow Jews in a concentration camp who were trying to retrieve potato peelings from the garbage cans next to the kitchen."[38] The man was found guilty, but a light sentence was handed down—he was held in short-term custody inside the camp.

This kind of trial was also banned by the Military Government. "Repeated instances arise, in which unauthorized 'Camp Courts' continue to operate in Assembly Centers," wrote IRO area director Guy Puntch in a letter to all Camp Committees. "Such courts are in contravention with Military and UNRRA/IRO regulations. They must therefore be abolished immediately," he said.[39] Still, such tribunals in the Jewish DP camps operated almost as long as the camps existed.

Educating the Masses

Education for the young was an item sitting high on everyone's agenda. Survivor children who had been out of school for years, having been camp inmates, hidden in cellars and in barns, or in the forests with partisans, were lagging behind their peers.

Thus attempts were made to provide schooling as well as extra curricular activities to camp children. Early in 1947, Jewish Agency's Dobkin proposed to the JDC Directorate in Paris that "the JDC and the Jewish Agency establish a center that would deal with child education and with cultural work among youth and adults in Europe [...] These would work alongside with local Jewish social forces [...] The plan is to recruit 200 teachers in Palestine, with the JDC's financial support."[40] The plan was accepted only partially: "The creation of any central office for educational and cultural activity seems premature," the directors responded to Dobkin, yet they were willing to put up the money for school and kindergarten teachers.[41] Thus an education agreement between the Agency, the JDC and the *Z.K.* was reached, to establish "an Education Department directed by two JDC representatives and two representative of the *Z.K.* [...] The syllabus will be general, national Jewish, non-partisan."[42]

Soon thereafter, the *Z.K.* in the American Zone had an impressive inventory of educational facilities at its disposal: 62 kindergartens, 62 elementary schools, four high schools, containing 14,000 children, and 600 teachers (mostly from Palestine), all financed by ORT, the JDC and UNRRA.[43]

Within this burgeoning community, one could find institutions like the *Geula* school in Nei Freimann. It was an elementary school with seven grades and 18 teachers. Some, like school director and Hebrew teacher Nechama Spector (who also taught history and science), came from Palestine; others were DPs with pre-war teaching experience, who as full-time employees[44] could enjoy food rationing privileges.[45] DP teachers were survivors from Poland and Latvia, who in the absence of formal documents, presented credentials by producing oral testimony of fellow DPs.[46] Thus Moshé Bertler taught geography and music, whereas his friend Moshé Yudevitz, formerly director of a Jewish *Tarbut* school in the town of Hajnówka, Poland, and now on his way to the United States, was teaching arithmetic and *Torah*.[47] Art teacher Jakob Celnik, a tall and sturdy bachelor

and concentration-camp survivor, "graduated from art school" in Warsaw.[48] "Speaks no Hebrew," said the teachers' index; yet Yiddish was sufficient, and he thus taught art and sometimes physical education.

Students practiced Hebrew, writing garbled essays about their experiences in an effort to adjust to a future life in a new language: "In 1939 I was with relatives for the holidays, one month long, and suddenly the Germans came and chased the Jews out of our town," wrote Rachel Landenbaum, a seventh-grader, "and my parents couldn't take me with them. I stayed with my uncle and aunt until 1942 and then the Germans chased away my relatives too. And I couldn't go with them, so I went to the gentiles in the village and said I needed work because my parents very poor and we had no food at home [...] It was winter and I had no warm clothes but I just had to go. I walked for three days and found another work and there I stayed until war ended, working hard in field and around the house. In 1945 I went back home and didn't find anyone except for uncle. My uncle took me in, and I lived with him and knew nothing about my family until 1946 when sister came back with brothers from Russia and then my uncle's sister came and now we live with our uncle."[49]

Extracurricular activity was in the form of youth movements, all Zionist of course. Yiddish newspapers and magazines—over 20 of them in 1947—were also published by the Education Department, serving as residents' primary source of information.[50] Despite the fiery ideological essays they often contained, they reveal the fact that the DPs were mostly concerned with everyday matters, and only slightly with grand political issues. Nor did their cultural and spiritual life revolve around the Zionist question; it remained, rather, simply Jewish, reflecting most people's personal past. But Palestine envoys were keen on the future, not the past. They were "to imbue the life of the people with the spirit of *Eretz Yisrael* and the greatness of the hour,"[51] claimed a circular by envoy Dov Zissale, Chairman of the Education Department in Munich. This was

also to be achieved through parties, performances and concerts, as the Agency was looking for ways to organize cultural and educational events that would emphasize the Zionist agenda. Palestine envoys, about 150 of them in the camps in 1947, naturally led this effort.[52] "I have sown the seeds of the idea of our national revival," wrote one of them unabashedly in his final report for 1947, "and they have sprouted here and there in the hearts of the survivors who listened intently. May they also bear the aspired fruit"[53] he ended with a patronizing tone, not atypical among his peers, as can be seen from this report, filed by an envoy in Beyreuth, Regensburg:

> The survivors (even the best of the lot) are hard to discipline and direct. They are extremely suspicious, inclined to gossip much, are keen about status symbols (probably in compensation for years of humiliation and oppression), and hardly cooperate.[54]

Zionist Tension: The Smell of Immigration

Sitting on their luggage, crowded and destitute, most DPs were wasting their days away in idle waiting. To many, the forced dependency on welfare and on the Military Government was raising existential questions. The debate mostly turned on whether to invest energy in the present or the future. If the present lifestyle was most definitely temporary, the future was clouded with tremendous uncertainty, as it held the greatest question of all: Where to go from here? In particular, should we go to Palestine, or to another country? "The camp," wrote an envoy at Ulm to his superiors in Jerusalem, "is a Jewish *shtetl* for better and for worse [...] Zionist tension rises and falls with the slightest tremor."[55] This tension was indeed slackening. As time went by, many of these who in 1946 had declared unequivocally that they were headed for Palestine and nowhere else, were now beginning to consider other options. The rise in anti-Semitism in Germany, going hand-in-hand with the return of

government to German hands, coupled with the escalation of hostilities in Palestine (where in 1947 matters seemed deadlocked), made many DPs register for immigration to the West, mostly the United States. Bluma Schor of Camp Feldafing, a 23-year old seamstress from Kalisz, Poland, who had spent the war in the Łodz ghetto before being deported to Auschwitz, wanted to go to New York. She signed an affidavit to the effect that "All my relatives in Europe have been exterminated by the Nazis, and I want to join my uncle, S. W. Rosenberg of 45, West 85th Street, New York."[56] Indeed, the limited immigration options not only to the United States, but also to Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, and Argentina were now seriously considered: "*Achtung!*" cried one of the messages in the camp press, "There is an opportunity to go to Australia, for Jewish typesetters fluent in Yiddish, who can operate a linotype machine. Those in possession of the appropriate skills may apply to HIAS at Ludwigsburg."[57] Some lucky DPs got the long-awaited visas: "*Bon voyage* to our comrade Herschl Passesorski. May you flourish in your new home in Australia," the Goldfarbs of Feldafing wished their friend.[58] Those who remained, though, continued to wait:

> In Ulm [...] people, boxes, crates, suitcases are all crowded together. On the wall, a drawing of a skyscraper and a man with bags. An inscription warns: You are off to a new Diaspora. Underneath, people are heaped on top of one another, children coughing, as are the elderly—their abode has been named: It is an immigrant home here, and they are awaiting their new Diaspora.[59]

Still, migration from Germany at this point was no more than a mere trickle: In 1947, only 30,000-32,000 Jews moved west from DP camps.[60] Of these, some reached Argentina (which between 1945-1947 took in 1,149 Jews, mostly from the camps),[61] 7,756 to Canada,[62] 4,342 to Brazil,[63] and at least 5,423 to Australia.[64] Another 30,000 Jews immigrated to the United

States in 1946-1948, mostly via Germany.[65] There, a public debate about the DP problem was raging between those favoring the opening of the gates of America to World War II DPs from Europe and their opponents.[66] During the years 1946-1947, about 50,000 Jews (mostly Eastern European) immigrated to countries other than Palestine. Thus, even if not "all countries" opened their gates to Jewish immigration, a considerable number of Jews still managed to immigrate, despite stiff restrictions that countries throughout the world now placed on the immigration of refugees.

Palestine, however, was still a destination many tried to reach, whether with immigration certificates issues by the Jewish Agency in keeping with the British quotas, or as illegal immigrants on boats that attempted to sneak into the shores of Palestine through the British blockade. These illegal missions mostly failed, and the hopeful immigrants were either detained in Palestine or Cyprus, or returned to their port of origin, as in the famous Exodus Affair in the summer of 1947.[67] Still, most DPs just sat and waited, at times in sub-human conditions. Moshé Ajzenbud described the suffering of the Jews at Nei-Ulm thus:

> You see people from Tronstein lying around there, people who were already thrice displaced, sitting there and waiting for their opportunity to immigrate. But who cares about them? The chief entrepreneur is some 'president' who struts around like Peter the Great (and all he is, is a just a limping little teacher) and on behalf of some Consul, turns to those helpless people kept behind barbed wires by the German police: I'll crush you like vermin! Now really, what a hero of a teacher…

While DPs were anxiously waiting for immigration permits and passage to western countries, Zionist activists were not as concerned with the closed-door policy that many of these countries imposed. On the contrary: With heavy hearts they watched Jews leaving for places other than Palestine. Those who

succeeded in escaping the harsh life in the DP camps were now condemned if the safe haven they found was not Palestine. Palestine envoys did empathize with the DPs—they witnessed the harsh conditions, the poverty and misery, and were aware of the fears and worries about the uncertain future. But more than that, they were worried about the change in destination. They realized that most DPs were now westward bound, and were very concerned. To understand their state of mind, it is most instructive to examine the strikingly uniform letters they sent to Jerusalem, in which they reported on the situation:

- In Munchenberg, about 300 Jews live in German houses all around town. This is not a camp, then, but rather a group of free living Jews by UNRRA standards. Their economic state is excellent, for the most part, and their Zionist spirit is accordingly weak.[68]
- I am in a camp of about 900 people [...] in the spa-resort town Bad Salzschlierz [...] This camp is extremely neglected in every way—Zionist parties are active here, but their Zionism is quite poor. Many have signed up to go to America, and though they have not done so yet, there is a heavy smell of immigration about. Some people returned to Poland and Russia. Sympathy for *Eretz Yisrael* is rampant, but not deeply-rooted [...] Schools face a danger of falling into non-Zionist hands.[69]
- As for the main problem (the appeal of Zionist pioneering, in my opinion), this camp shows great apathy. In spite of the multiplicity of parties, each boasting of its better brand of Zionism, the results of education do not go beyond mere talk. Estimates are difficult to make, but I am familiar with many cases of registration for immigration to various countries even within the kibbutz groups, not to mention party members, even activists.[70]
- The situation here is very grave, of course. The number of people leaving Italy for America and Brazil is growing steadily.[71]

Watching the DPs desire to make *'aliyáh* cool off caused Palestine envoys great concern. They wrote anxious reports to Jerusalem, seeking help. "The situation of Jews in Germany is getting worse, their future is most unclear," reads the journal of the Jewish Agency delegation in early 1947. "Our endurance depends mostly on the activists among *She'erit ha-pleyta*."[72] Their superiors in Jerusalem did not understand the distress. From their Jerusalem vantage point, they could neither fathom their colleagues' anxiety regarding the decline of the Zionist spirit, nor could they empathize with the DPs. Instead, they responded with somewhat self-righteous prose that seemed quite detached:

> It cannot be an exaggeration to say that the group of Jews in Germany, among the largest in Europe, and a prime candidate for *'aliyáh*, plays a prominent role in our national revival. This can be said more emphatically of the younger generation, that generation that will have to take upon itself the many pioneering tasks we have in front of us.[73] Yours, comrades, is the greater role in paving the way. The bloody struggle currently waged in Palestine is not the central one. Our true front is one of immigration, absorption and the establishment of the state.[74]

This correspondence is remarkable. It show how despite differences in perspectives, envoys and directors all agreed on the primacy of *'aliyáh*. Indeed, to them Palestine immigration was a prime necessity, taking precedence over any personal need or desire. In the reality they constructed, *'aliyáh* might even save children from their selfish parents:

> A huge effort is invested here by envoys of the youth movements [...] Their mission, one might say, is 'to nurture the young souls'. But here they face a force so powerful that it precludes us from saving children and adolescents—the parents. There is no way to convince them to give us their children to go to Eretz Yisrael so that they can enroll in schools. They are unwilling to separate from their

children (the true reason is actually the extra food rations they thus receive from IRO and the JDC).[76]

Two equations followed: On the one hand, a Jew immigrating to Palestine fulfills the national calling, thereby becoming one of us;[77] on the other hand, a Jew who is not going to Palestine (whether remaining in Germany or immigrating elsewhere) does not fulfill the national calling, hence betrays the common cause, and is thus ostracized.

8 An Overture to the DP Draft

> Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to *Eretz-Israel*, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland.
>
> From the Proclamation of Independence, 1948

The *Haganáh* European Command Plans for War

The *Yishuv* did not only dispatch politicians, educators and trainers to the DPs. Representatives of the largest, most important, and best trained Jewish paramilitary organization in Palestine, *Haganáh*, also came to the camps, initially to help the DPs train for self-defense in the camps, and later to prepare combat reserves for an army of a state just about to be born. Early in 1946, Nahum Shadmi (later Brig. Gen.) came to Paris. Having served in the senior *Haganáh* position of the Jerusalem regional commander, he was now dispatched to set headquarters in Europe, to contact Jewish underground organizations, especially with Jewish veterans of the *maquis* in France, and to start recruiting and training potential immigrants to Palestine, who would join the Jewish forces in Palestine. In 1947, the European mission grew, and a *Haganáh* command post was set up in Germany. Some members of the mission were unable to enter Germany as Jewish Agency envoys, and thus posed as refugees. Germany was divided into five districts, *Haganáh* delegations opened in many camps, and the training, as well as preparation of new recruits, began.[1] Working through the camps' physical

education departments, the *Haganáh* had membership and command, as well as an organizational infrastructure, in Germany, Austria and Italy in a matter of months. They even managed to create a training camp in Wildebad, and a command school in Hochland, where the first trainees would soon become leaders themselves, and train some 300 recruits during the years of the school's existence.[2]

Paramilitary training served multiple purposes. First, it gave the DPs tools for self-defense; second, it trained them for their future as soldiers in the forming Israel Defense Force; finally, it was instrumental in consolidating Zionist elites among the DP. *Haganáh* representatives were idolized right from the start, projecting an image of a strong, resilient, and proud Jew. Being accepted by them thus granted one a special status. Nahum Shadmi described it succinctly: "Every camp in which we set up a chapter immediately looked different. Every word coming out of our mouths was received with enthusiasm; even the simplest, most common, maneuver was eagerly awaited. Taking the *Haganáh* oath became a sacred rite of passage."[3]

A special oath for *She'erit ha-pleyta* was invented, distinct from the one in Palestine. New *Haganáh* member DPs would place their hand on a Bible and vow, in Yiddish or Hebrew, "to fight for the immigration of all remaining Jews in Europe to Palestine, in every way and under any condition, as determined by the World Zionist Organization. To defend the lives, well-being and honor of Jewish brethren everywhere, and in compliance with orders of my superiors, and to devote [my] life to the Zionist-pioneering war for the national independence of the People of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*."[4]

And new members did join, though not in large numbers. *Haganáh* delegates used them to build an infrastructure for their own organization as well as for the *B'richáh* that needed trained personnel to smuggle Jews across European borders. The rate of illegal immigration operations to Palestine went up in 1947. The Exodus affair, to take the best known example, involved numer-

ous activists, many of them newly trained DPs. Later on, writes *Haganáh* deputy commander in Europe Yehuda Ben-David in his memoirs, DP trainees would also serve as recruitment officers in the spring of 1948 draft-drive.[5] But that would happen later—early on, nobody could even dream of a general draft in Germany for Palestine, to help the Zionists in the military struggle that would erupt around the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Thus, even though *Haganáh* commanders viewed Germany as a 'resource country' for manpower,[6] no concrete plan existed as of yet for turning this resource into cadres of soldiers with combat capacity.

Planners may not have conceived of this idea then, but Nahum Shadmi did: Having been a senior commander in Palestine, he read the writing on the wall, and envisioned severe manpower shortages in Palestine. Realizing that such future shortages could be alleviated by European draftees, he began making quiet moves towards initial steps of a mobilization among European Jews. To this end, he called a meeting of Palestine activists in early November of 1947. Convened in Prague (where he and his staff had been transferred), several dozen commanders of the highest echelon met—including *Haganáh* National Chief of Staff Moshé Sneh, *B'richáh* commander Efraim Dekel, and Shaul Avigur, head of *Mossad*. Shadmi had a seemingly grandiose plan: As a UN resolution on the question of Palestine was approaching, he thought that the Zionists had to take action at an increased speed, in preparation for war. He thus proposed that all *yishuv* activities in Europe be merged and put under one command, and further recommended that an infrastructure be set for the mobilization of 20,000 men for the army, just about to be officially created. Shadmi was able to report on the order-of-battle of trained personnel currently at his disposal: 264 commanders, 2054 foot soldiers with 4 hours of training each, and 600 additional foot soldiers with more training.[7] But to his disappointment, his proposal was opposed by all senior officials present, including *Mossad*'s Avigur (who,

thinking about territory and power, had previously tried to restrict *Haganáh* activities in Europe). The refusal to accept Shadmi's plan forced the *Haganáh* command to stay on the sidelines of the unfolding drama, at least for the time being.[8]

The rejection of the plan in early November did not stop the *Haganáh* command completely. Despite his failure in Prague, Shadmi assembled his men and instructed them to focus less on self-defense, and more on training for war.[9] Indeed, they immediately made some early preparations for mobilization in the DP camps, taking advantage of the infrastructure already in place, laid out earlier by their envoys. On November 29th, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181, approving of a plan to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. This historic decision marked the beginning of open hostilities in Palestine. The European commanders of *Haganáh* now changed their plan: The organization of self-defense in the camps was stopped completely; the *Haganáh* was turned into a mobilization apparatus, aimed to recruit and train fresh manpower to be shipped to Palestine as soon as would be possible.[10] From this moment on, members of the organization were recruiting. And, while up to this point, activities in the DP camps were carried out on an entirely voluntary basis, something new was now introduced: In early 1948, *Haganáh* men in the camps began demanding that camp committees hand them detailed lists of all residents. "We inform you," read a *Haganáh* announcement, written in broken Yiddish, and sent to a camp committee, "that a *Haganáh* command post now operates in Camp Feldafing, and all Zionist movements are now under its command. We therefore demand of you, in the name of the *Haganáh* committee, to join the *Haganáh*, and to send us the lists of the members of your movement before Friday, January 30."[11]

In Palestine, in the meantime, fears were rising. Planners came to recognize the alarming shortage in manpower necessary for the impending war. Not surprisingly, their attention turned to *She'erit ha-pleyta* as a potential resource. In the end of February

1948, Shaul Avigur, head of *Mossad* (who had previously been opposed to recruitment in Europe) held a meeting in Paris with representatives of all Zionist organizations: Jewish Agency directors, political party leaders, as well as *Haganáh* commanders. The resolution that came out of the meeting was to call upon every man and woman in the DP camps, age 17 to 35, to come and sign up for the forming army of the Jewish state, and then go to Palestine.[12] This call was no simple matter: How can a draft for Palestine, carried out on European soil, be justified? It was a tough question, that harbored a possible conflict with the DPs over the authority of the Zionist institutions outside Palestine. All parties to the conflict were Jewish. Yet geography made a difference, setting European Jews and Palestine Jews apart: Many in Europe felt no personal bond, commitment, or interest in Palestine, whereas for the latter, Palestine was home.

Again the first to understand the difficulty was Nahum Shadmi. The pressing necessity to reinforce combat manpower led him to a creative solution. He made the following assertion at the meeting:

> We compel the Jews of the DP camps to enlist. As though they are citizens of Israel, not Germany, just as Belgian Jews are citizens of Belgium. They are citizens of Israel who are prevented from reaching Israel, but citizens of Israel nonetheless. As soon as citizens of Israel of such and such ages are drafted, the duty is likewise imposed upon the Surviving Remnant.

It was precisely the most important difference between the groups, that Shadmi was forced to blur, in order to achieve the Zionist goal and maximize the draft. He reasoned that since the DPs were Jews, they were also Zionists, and not just in spirit, but in actuality. This made them potential citizens of the state in the making, which *ipso facto* obliged them to carry out the duties imposed on all. The equation Jew=Zionist was thus validated. He was the only one in the Paris meeting to discuss this topic, and his

assertion seems to have been acceptable to all, as there were no objections to it, nor was it further discussed. With such an overture, the drama that was coming is not difficult to imagine. The organizational infrastructure that the Zionists had laid was ready. Camp residents could do nothing but wait with bated breath.

Preparing for the Draft

The pending departure of the British forces from Palestine underscored the magnitude of the problems that the *Yishuv* leadership was facing. Of these, manpower shortage was the most pressing, as initial planning for war indicated. As early as October 1947, planners had come to realize that general mobilization of the population for military service was imminent. An all out war seemed almost certain, and thus, preparations were to begin immediately and in full force. Ben-Gurion, speaking at a session of *'Aseyfat ha-Nivcharim* (The Congregation of Elects), demanded "complete mobilization of the community, of the economy, manpower, organizational capacity, the advantages of science and technology, and of the public's volunteering spirit, in the shortest time and in full blown momentum, within the country, as well as in Diaspora." [13] The size of the regular armed forces at the end of 1947 was very small, and comprised of a mere 4,500 men and women, with an additional 40,000 minimally trained reservists.[14] The necessity of a general mobilization was obvious, yet the leadership had none of the formal authority that a sovereign state has, by virtue of which it can call on its citizens to come and defend their country. Whatever powers the leadership possessed depended on its legitimacy within the *Yishuv*, not on the law. Worse yet, security matters were all in the hands of the paramilitary *Haganáh*, an organization with no capability of carrying out a compulsory draft, especially one aimed at reaching people from all walks of life. This situation called for an administrative move, and thus in November 1947 a separate civilian agency, *ha-Merkaz le-*

Sheyrut ha-'Am (The Center for the Service of the People) was established, headed by Levi Shkolnik (later Eshkol, Prime Minister of Israel) and Binyamin Avni'el. The Center was mandated to "mobilize the *Yishuv*, classify its manpower and allocate it according to the People's needs."[15] Shkolnik and Avni'el's role was to design, build and organize an apparatus for compulsory draft, so as to ensure that the manpower potential of the *Yishuv* could be exploited in full. The reservoir from which all conscripts were to be drawn was presented to the leadership in the form of this table:[16]

Sex	*Age*	*Number*
Men	16-17	9,500
	18-35	97,000
	36-50	78,000
Women	16-17	9,000
	18-25	41,000
Totals		**234,500**

Table 8-1: Jewish human resources, Palestine, 1948

That these numbers were ostensibly insufficient for the war effort was clear to everyone. The count spanned *all* men and women of appropriate ages, including those who could not be drafted, namely the handicapped, married women, and indispensable employees of crucial service industries. Faced with stronger armies on the enemy side, the leadership was quick to recognize the necessity of maximizing the size of its military force. It was within this grim context, and in an absence of formal authority, that the Center began its mobilizing activity. Its first act, on November 30th, 1947, was to call for draft registration. A decree was issued on the very morning that followed the famous UN Resolution 181 in Lake Success, in which a two-state solution was approved by the international organization (the "Partition Plan," which recommended the establishment of a Jewish state side-by-side with an Arab state in the territory of Western Palestine). It read: "The state we are building is calling

you to Service. The National Institutions announce by decree that every person of age 17-25 must register for the draft." Signed on the call was "The Center," on behalf of the 'National Institutions'—the Jewish Agency for Palestine and the National Committee of *Knesset Yisrael* (Parliament of Israel). "These days," the call read, "the great vision of return to Zion and of national resurgence is becoming a reality."[17] Registration offices opened all over the country, and people stood in line to register, with a relatively high rate of compliance: Fifty-six percent of those who were called registered during the first two weeks.[18] By the end of January 1948, 23,212 men and women registered. The number of draft dodgers at this point was very small. Only later, as the scope of the draft broadened, would compliance rates get lower, and the number of dodgers increase. Conscientious objectors were few: All in all, there were less than ten throughout the war.[19]

The growing size of the emerging army generated new administrative needs. A mechanism for the processing of new conscripts was thus established, as was a recruitment base. The search and draft of potential officers and NCOs was expanded as well. In February 1948, a new step was taken: Mobilization of all childless men and women aged 25-35 was announced. This move raised the number of draftees (together with veterans of the British Army who were recruited through a separate mechanism) to 52,000 by the end of April, and to 100,000 (or more) in May 1948.[20] Yet all these new recruits were still too few. "We were forced to make a choice," recalled in his memoirs Yosef Yizra'eli, a member of the *Haganáh* general staff, and co-director of the mobilization apparatus, "between raising the draft age to 40 and higher, and lowering it by decreeing a youth draft, of the seventeen year olds."[21] A decision was finally made to mobilize the youth, but even this step was insufficient. May 15th, the day of the British exit, was approaching, and with it the expected Proclamation of Independence, followed by a projected invasion of the Arab armies into Palestine. These prospects further underscored the shortage of fighting personnel. The urgent need

of a significant increase in the number of soldiers that the emerging army could use was becoming more and more apparent. As local manpower was dwindling, the focus had to shift abroad, to "reservoir countries" where human resources of top quality could bring in new recruits. Ben-Gurion's earlier statement that the essence of Zionism was "to populate *Eretz Yisrael* with multitudes of Jews"[22] was about to take on a new meaning. The goal of immigration now was much more focused: Jews coming to Palestine were now to assume a military role.

A Plan for a Foreign Draft is Approved in Jerusalem

The severe shortage of fighting personnel was a source of great concern for Ben-Gurion, who had already been anxious about the imminent departure of the British. He was desperately looking for additional human resources. He calculated that the army needed twenty thousand more draftees, a figure that the remaining manpower reserves in the *Yishuv* were unable to provide.[23] No solution was in sight, yet on March 15th Nahum Shadmi, who had been promoting the idea of a foreign draft for months, came from Europe to pay Ben-Gurion a visit. This meeting followed the Paris convention, where plans for a European draft were outlined. Shadmi was thus in a position to report confidently about explicit plans to draft in Europe, as well as venues devised to bring recruits to Palestine through *Ha'apaláh*. These plans, he said reassuringly, could be tailor-made to the army's needs at any moment in the near future. He handed out generous promises: He and his people could "train 3,500 men during March-April, excluding commanders." He also committed to an additional 3,000 better-trained men to be sent by May 15th, and later another 5,500 that would be brought from Eastern Europe. However, the execution of these plans, he said, would cost money, and necessitate "JDC aid for the trainees," amounting to $200,000 for five months.[24]

Ben-Gurion was very surprised, Shadmi later wrote in his memoirs. "He had no idea about this, and was happy to learn that immigrants were being drafted."[25] He liked Shadmi's plan, as he realized that a foreign draft was crucial for the maximization of the number of soldiers and fighters.

There is hardly any evidence that the *Yishuv* leadership was concerned with legal issues regarding the formal authority from which the power to conduct a full-scale draft in Palestine could be derived. These measures obviously won public support and cooperation, and were thus taken to be legitimate. A draft on foreign soil, however, was a very different matter. In this case, not only was the drafting agency moving to infringe on American and British sovereignty in Germany, but also, the draft was for an entity that was not even a state. Moreover, the candidates for the draft were not inhabitants, let alone citizens, of the geographic region in which statehood was about to be proclaimed. The *Yishuv* leadership was calling on Jewish DPs in Germany and Austria to come defend a territory that they did not know, and whose language they did not speak. Still, no discussion of this issue is found. Neither Shadmi nor Ben-Gurion noted any formal obstacles that were considered when the plan was approved, nor do the orders and correspondence contain hints of concern. The Zionist leadership took the allegiance of Jewish DPs to its cause for granted.

To the extent that formalistic matters and questions of jurisdiction and authority did occupy the minds of *Yishuv* leaders, they had to do with their own organizations. The foreign draft was not an innocuous proposition in this respect either. The hegemony of the *Haganáh* over the Zionist draft operations in Europe had been challenged from the very beginning: Shadmi had been facing hostile opposition from *Mossad* commander Shaul Avigur, who until then had total authority over the *Ha'apaláh* (illegal immigration) operations, as the *Mossad* was solely responsible for the selection and mobilization of Jews aimed at reaching Palestine through this venue. He now per-

ceived Shadmi's initiative as infringing on his jurisdiction. If Shadmi's plans were to succeed, *Mossad* autonomy would be in danger. Thus Avigur and his deputy Yehuda Arazi made several attempts to jeopardize the foreign draft already at the initial planning phase. Now that a decision had been made by the leadership in Palestine, the dispute needed to be resolved—intervention from above was called for. So, unlike the more general problem of a draft for an informal national entity on foreign land which seems to have been of little concern to Ben-Gurion, internal quibbles of this sort were issues he considered important. Thus three days later he dispatched Shadmi to Paris, and equipped him with a letter to Ze'ev Schind (Danny), of the *Mossad* office in France. Ben-Gurion stated his orders in unambiguous terms:

> War depends on immigration, because manpower available in the country will not suffice. The Arabs have huge reserves, and now we need people from abroad for the war, but *'aliyáh* that is not fully directed—totally and completely—to war necessities is not a blessing right now, and you must realize that your own action, just as the life in the *Yishuv*, has to adjust to the war's needs, that is to say:
>
> a. Send only people aged 18-35, or up to 40 in exceptional cases, capable of using firearms.
> b. Everything must be done in order to train the people in the use of firearms prior to sending them here, and you must see this as part of their *'aliyáh* [...]
> c. May 15th is judgment day [...] hence, *'aliyáh* of trained people must be expedited.
>
> This letter is delivered to you by Nahum [Shadmi]. Together with the *B'richáh* organization you will be held responsible, should Nahum not fulfill his mission to train the people. He demands forty thousand dollars a month. I could get him this money, but I would have to take it from resources that are to be used by our people in the Negev or Galilee, and I have a distinct feeling that I must not do that, and thus, you have to raise this money[...]"[26]

Shadmi's tenacious insistence on a European draft was beginning to bear fruit. He now had to deliver on his promises, and mobilize a sizeable number of draftees in Europe, mostly from the major "reservoir country," a term he and his men used for Germany. He returned to Paris, met with Shaul Avigur and showed him the letter. Avigur made no attempt to conceal his displeasure with Ben-Gurion's order, yet at the same time had no intention to disobey. The foreign draft, conceptualized and approved by the central institutions, was now ready to be implemented.

While the change of plans in Palestine was taking place, local Jewish authorities in Germany began preparing their own organizational apparatus for the upcoming draft in the DP camps. Preparations had begun already before Ben-Gurion's decision became known, as Shadmi had not waited for the ultimate green light: Earlier, before he went on the trip to Palestine and the meeting with Ben-Gurion, he laid the foundation for the draft of DPs, and convinced the DP leadership—the powerful, Munich-based *Z.K.*—of the urgency and feasibility of his plan. And so, three administrative entities from Palestine and one local agency were involved in the draft: The operation was directed by the *Haganáh* in Europe, which originated the incentive.[27] The Jewish Agency Delegation in Munich, headed by Dr. Chayim Hoffmann, gave crucial assistance to the *Z.K.* in the camps, while Avigur's *Mossad* transported the soldiers-to-be to Palestine (despite his earlier objections). Finally, grassroots work was done through the DP self-management system, a pyramid-like structure with the *Z.K.* at the top. The operation would consist in four stages (see Table 8-2).

A propaganda campaign was now planned, to be run by a new administrative agency entrusted with the execution of the mobilization operation. It was set up in keeping with the model already established in Palestine: A *Merkaz le-Sheyrut ha-'am* (Center for the Service of the People), fashioned after the one Shkolnik and Avni'el had established in Tel Aviv, was founded in

PROPAGANDA
⇩
REGISTRATION
⇩
VOLUNTARY DRAFT
⇩
FORCED CONSCRIPTION

Table 8-2: The sequence of draft operations

the Jewish Agency offices in Munich as early as February, subsequent to the Paris meeting. The *Haganáh*, together with the Jewish Agency and *Z.K.* leaders began distributing instructions to regional and local camp committees, explaining how to set up 'Committees for the Service of the People.' The infrastructure for the draft drive in the DP camps was beginning to be formed.

A precondition to a voluntary draft in a community is increased awareness of its necessity and urgency, a goal achieved through effective propaganda. With this in mind, the Jewish Agency made its first move: It disseminated leaflets and circulars in the camps, inaugurating the first phase of the draft. The postings, mostly in Yiddish, contained instructions, suggestions, advice, and propaganda material aimed at increasing awareness of the draft among the DPs. An example is the following widely distributed circular:

Merkaz le-sheyrut ha-'am
('Center for the Service of the People')
by the Jewish Agency for Palestine
Munich, 11 Maria Teresia Str.
To all centers of the Commission for the Service of the People in the camps:

We are sending you slogans that must call for the service of the people. We ask that you hang them on large posters in the camp entrance. Slogans 1,4,5,7 on large posters inside the camp. The remaining posters must hang in halls, clubs, and all institutions.

SLOGANS

1. Mobilize for the service of the people!
2. Every hour is dear and irreversible.
3. Generations have waited, you won, fulfill your duty!
4. No dodgers in our camp.
5. Have you done everything you could for your people?
6. There will be no Jewish youth outside the row of builders and fighters.
7. Go today, tomorrow may be too late!
8. Save your life and freedom!
9. Every Jew—a soldier and a builder.
10. The enemy is waiting, save your life.

In every camp, a corner for the Service of the People must be arranged. In the center of the camp there must be a board with all the material you will be getting from the Center for the Service of the People: Bulletins, placards, appeals.

Ha-Merkaz le-Sheyrut ha-'Am
Center for the Service of the People 3.16.48[28]

Next, the *Z.K.* apparatus, with its regional and local committees, snapped into action. Its first move was an experimental draft registration drive on a small scale. The test site chosen was Camp Feldafing, one of the largest in the American Zone (housing over 3,000 residents in early 1948).[29] This camp was probably selected for this experiment because of its geographic proximity to the Jewish Agency and *Z.K.* headquarters in Munich. Earlier, in January, a public notice was handwritten in Yiddish, and posted in the camp. It informed the public of the establishment of a *Haganáh* branch in the camp. Now, two months later, an invitation to a meeting was sent to Camp Committee members, representatives of the various political parties and youth movements, heads of the ORT operations and of the *kibbutz* movements. "On Monday, 3.19," it read, "at 2pm sharp, there will be a meeting regarding *Giyus* in the head offices of the camp, with a representative from the *Z.K.* in Munich present. Due to the importance of the matter you are requested to arrive on time."[30] The Hebrew word *Giyus* (draft) would become familiar to every camp dweller from this moment on, as it would

feature in documents, leaflets and orders that the *Z.K.* and its enforcement arms would issue.

The meeting called by the Center for the Service of the People in Feldafing indeed began at two that day. As promised, *Z.K.* Secretary General Comrade Eyfe was present. He opened the meeting with a speech on the importance of the draft enterprise, and then gave directions to the future local organizers regarding mobilization methods. He also ordered the establishment of a *Giyus* (draft) Commission which was to be composed of representatives of the various organizations in the camp, with "energetic men" whom he listed by name.[31] Indeed, two days later, a report to the *Z.K.* was dispatched by the camp committee, providing details of the newly established *Giyus* Commission. It consisted exactly of the persons Comrade Eyfe had recommended so warmly: Commission Chief—Berl Gurevitch; Camp Committee Representatives—Kenigshtein and Mildiner; ORT Representative—Halperin; Representative of the Youth Movements—Kaminski; *Haganáh* representatives—Kelnbrener and Kratz.[32]

The *Yishuv* in Palestine had one more area in which the destitute DPs could help. In addition to manpower it needed funds. So, a tax was to be imposed on Jewish DPs in Germany and Austria, a task that was to be carried out by the Jewish Agency delegation. This organization had already had several successes. First, it conducted an *'aliyáh* census, which yielded the names of all potential immigrants to Palestine among the DPs. It then took further steps in connection with the war in Palestine. Using its lists, it enacted a voluntary defense tax (*mas 'am lochem*—a tax for a fighting nation), which took levy from the DPs and sent it to support the war effort. Now, however, it could seize the moment, take advantage of new opportunities, and intensify its activities. The idea was to use the *Giyus* Commissions in the camps as vehicles for tax collection. Thus, at the same meeting where Comrade Eyfe ordered the establishment of a *Giyus* Commission in Camp Feldafing, he also reported the successes of the money collection operation, proudly

announcing that $100,000 had already been gathered, an amount that exceeded expectations. He also noted severely that the Feldafing Camp was "in the red in its payments to the Defense Fund," and demanded that the Camp Committee intensify its money collecting operations, so that the DPs' financial support of the *Yishuv* could increase.

With the Feldafing experiment in place, the *Z.K.*, the Jewish Agency and the *Haganáh* could now begin the second phase of the operation—a full-scale registration was enacted in the camps. At first the administrative steps appeared to work, as camp committees were cooperative, working together with the Jewish Agency and the *Z.K.* Thus in April, Dr. Hoffmann could send a report to Jerusalem with an air of self-satisfaction about it:

> 1. Central to our work is the mobilization of manpower for the decisive battle. This job was initially difficult, because most of the youth has already left (we should not forget that about forty thousand Jews have already left Germany for *Eretz Yisrael*), but as time went by, we got over many of the difficulties. To this day, 1,800 people have left for the service of the people, and from Austria, over 300. Immediately after the Jewish holidays 400 more will leave from Kurt Levine's region [Austria] and about another 1,000 will be ready to leave from Germany during May. We will, presumably, reach 5,000 in Germany and Austria.
> 2. Defense money collection has been going around all regions and is not over yet. So far, 260,000 dollars have been collected, and we will most likely exceed 300,000, a nice contribution of *She'erit Ha-pleyta* to the war effort [...]
> 3. The *'aliyáh* census is conducted in all the camps and in most of the communities. It has covered, on average, 60% of camp Jews.[33]

Organizers of the mobilization operation were optimistic about the prospective compliance of the camp residents not only because of the bureaucracy they had established. They

also relied on polls taken in the camps from time to time, which indicated that most Jewish DPs shared a desire to immigrate to Palestine. The organizers took these results as a realistic reflection of the current situation. They were oblivious, however, to the change in the general atmosphere in the camps, one that did not work for the better of the Zionist cause. The political as well as individual situation of most camp residents pushed morale down: Continuing infiltration of Jews from the East to the American Zone of Germany further increased camp density; the black market was flourishing; German police were raiding the camps more frequently. Moreover, DPs were now anxiously following the development of the "democratization" process of local government that the Americans initiated. They watched the election of Nazis to public posts in local government. Some newly elected mayors were preaching anti-Semitism openly, much to the horror of the Jewish DPs. And above all, a solution to their own problem—the problem of DP resettlement somewhere around the world—was not in sight. Thousands of destitute Jews were loitering in the camps in poverty, idleness, and in an absence of hope. Life in the camps was becoming harder.

Apathy and Despair

The overall situation in Germany was grim. The Cold War was soaring to new heights, and as Germany was the main point of friction between the two superpowers at the time, tensions were quite noticeable. The Allied Control Council—the body mandated to supervise the implementation of the various agreements (mostly those signed at the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences) was disbanded in March. Among the reasons for its end was the success of the Marshall plan, designed to benefit only the western parts of Germany, and the plan to enact a currency change there. The Soviets, mounting a reaction, began blocking access routes to the zones of Berlin that were controlled by the Western Allies.

Tensions were rising, until they reached a peak on June 24th, as the Soviet blockade on Berlin began, leaving a population of two hundred and fifty thousand residents completely dependent on airlifts.[34] The situation in general, then, was grave. The Jewish DPs, already worried about the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany, now had new reasons for concern, as new potential calamities were in sight. Finally, the intensifying conflict in Palestine scared many, who now changed their minds, abandoning previous plans to immigrate there. These DPs began contemplating other solutions. Some (especially those going on their fourth year in the camps) considered settling in Germany on a permanent basis, despite the rise in anti-Semitic incidents around them. Others abandoned hope altogether, making themselves ready for yet more miserable years in the camps.

The DPs' despair stemmed from yet another source: The United States. The many who were hoping to immigrate there were put on hold, as the debate on the DP Bill, aimed to authorize the DPs from Europe to enter into the country, continued in Congress. Supporters of the Bill, including President Truman, Jewish politicians and lobbyists, were unable to pass it. Opposition to it was powerful: Nationalistic, political and economical motives, as well as anti-Semitism and xenophobia, led many Congressmen to object to this Bill, and until 1948 no authorization to admit DPs had been enacted. Now the debate was heating up, becoming more focused and relating to issues with far reaching consequences. The first and most important of these had to do with the definition of eligible DPs, which was to be determined by their date of entry into the American Zone in Germany. The narrow definition that was proposed maintained that a DP who had entered Germany after December 22nd, 1945 would not be permitted to immigrate to the United States; this would reduce the number of eligible persons significantly; the more inclusive approach sought to establish the deadline at April 21st, 1947—the time of General McNarney's directive to deny

status and support from new infiltrees. The difference between the two definitions amounted to 200,000 eligible DPs, hence the stakes were high.[35] A second critical question that was debated regarded the percentage of Jewish DPs among the lucky recipients of immigration visas. Not surprisingly, several Senators worked hard to reduce this number, and admit ethnic Germans, Czechs, and other Europeans instead. This protracted debate had clear effects on the morale in the camps, as DPs were waiting anxiously for a decision.

The low morale did not pass unnoticed by the local authorities. The Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, Professor William Haber (who had arrived in early 1948 from the Department of Economics at the University of Michigan),[36] made an attempt to solve some of the problems. He initiated a "summit" meeting on March 15th, to which he invited senior representatives of all the organizations that were working with the DPs in the camps. Present at the meeting were Jewish Agency representatives, including Dr. Hoffmann, JDC, HIAS, and ORT people, envoys of the Rabbinical Rescue Commission, and IRO directors. Also present were *Z.K.* leaders, headed by David Treger. The spirit at the meeting was quite gloomy. The discussion revolved around the black market, the mobilization to *Haganáh*, employment, German police raids, and related matters.[37] Dr. Hoffmann noted the apathy of the DPs in the camps, and complained about the suspicious attitude of the US military authorities toward the infiltrees from the Soviet block. *Z.K.*'s Treger argued that "the camps must be shaken up and the people must be reminded of their mission with respect to Palestine [...] Everything must be done to prevent the people from vegetating in the camps." Advisor Haber reviewed the likelihood that the DP Bill, recently approved by the United States Senate Judiciary Committee, would be effected. The Bill was to allow 100,000 DPs to enter the United States in the next two years, on condition that half this number would be trained as agricultural workers. Haber expressed his belief that the Bill would be

amended, and the number of DPs allowed in the United States would be doubled, yet with the qualification that only 15 percent of these could be Jews. Dr. Hoffmann was quick to provide a Zionist response: "It is clear," he said, "that if given permission, the Jewish Agency for Palestine would not reject any Jew willing to immigrate to Palestine. Of necessity, however, priorities will have to be established. On the assumption that the UN decision [to establish a Jewish state] will go into effect on May 15th, it is contemplated that, in 1948, 75,000 to 100,000 Jews will be moved into Palestine [...] Moreover, because of the present emergency in Palestine and because of the country's immediate future needs, first priority will be given to those who can serve in the army, who can perform indispensable manual labor, and to unaccompanied children." Dr. Hoffmann was, nonetheless, pessimistic about the motivation of the DPs' for immigration to Palestine: "Not so long ago," the protocol of the meeting reads, "he was certain that at least two-thirds of the Jewish DPs would want to stake out for Palestine. He is not so sure at the present time."

Summarizing the meeting, Haber sent a report to the "Five Jewish Organizations," on whose behalf he had been sent to Germany:

> It is my impression that the fighting in Palestine and the doubts about the United States position on support of partition, coupled with the relative sense of security and "business connections" which many of the DPs have established for themselves here, may compel us to revise our impressions as to the proportion of Jewish DPs who "intend" to go to Palestine. The issue is, of course, academic, and the actual test cannot be made until legal immigration becomes available. There are, nevertheless, "straws in the wind" which suggest that there is nothing static about the direction of emigration. Frankly, I have been told by responsible officials in the work here that, in spite of the hardships and the ominous outlook, many, per-

> haps a very large number of Jewish DPs, have accommodated themselves to the prevailing situation here and are not inclined to go to places where the risks are very great. This is a significant development only if actual emigration becomes possible, for it might indicate that the high hopes that the DPs already in Germany and Austria will be a source of substantial movement to Palestine may be misplaced. The Jews in Roumania [*sic*], Hungary and other places in the east may be a more likely source.[38]

The DP Bill finally went into effect in its narrower form on July 1st, but the debate still continued through the summer. Its initial effect on Jewish DPs was obviously adverse, as options became more restricted: Twenty three thousand potential immigrants from Germany (mostly Jews), who had previously secured a priority for immigration, lost it now, because the Bill explicitly annulled all previous directives that had granted such priorities. The situation, then, was grave. "Some estimated (mistakenly, as it later turned out) that only thirty thousand more Jews would be allowed to enter the United States."[39]

Spirits in the camps were justifiably low. It was in this type of atmosphere and mood that the draft organizers had to seek manpower for the newly born Israeli army.

Ha'apaláh Operations for the War

Zionist organizations in Europe, in the meantime, were also attempting to adjust to the changing reality. The manpower shortage for the fighting army forced modifications in the illegal immigration plan. The group of activists involved in this, mostly members of the clandestine *Mossad*, had already become a legend, and poems describing their glorious actions were written, emphasizing the mythical bond between the new immigrant and the land of Palestine:

Silently a boat sails yonder	בַּחֲשַׁאי סְפִינָה גוֹשֶׁשֶׁת.
Dark is the night, rough is the sea	לַיִל שָׁחוֹר, הַיָּם זָעַף.
See, oh Land of ancient wonder	הוֹ, שִׁמְעִי, אַדְמַת מוֹרֶשֶׁת,
A tired son returns to Thee.[40]	שָׁב אֵלַיִךְ בֵּן עָיֵף.

Now, however, new operational orders were issued: No more boats to bring homeless refugees to a safe haven. From the moment Ben-Gurion's new orders were sent to the *Mossad* people in France through Shadmi, the decisions of the February 29th convention in Paris (with *Ha'apaláh*, *B'richáh*, and *Haganáh* delegates) were getting into effect.[41] *Haganáh* and *Mossad* took upon themselves the task of moving fifteen thousand Jews of draft age and capability from Europe to Palestine by May 15th. Quotas were imposed on organizers in the various countries, aimed at carrying out the plan to bring in five thousand in March and April, and another ten thousand in May.[42] *Mossad* people actually received stricter orders: From this moment on no immigrants who lacked military capability were to be brought to Palestine. "We need only persons who fit the *Haganáh*,"[43] wrote Ben-Gurion and Galili to commanders of *Mossad* in Europe. In February, the Paris *Mossad* office dispatched a boat with children to Palestine, yet, unlike previous times, a grave telegram was immediately received from the command in Tel Aviv: "The leadership is not thanking us this time for the 860 children," they wrote. "In any event, you may not send children until further notice."[44] The order, then, was to ship over only persons who could fight; the envoys were expected to obey. "All the institutions are angry about the composition of the shipments," cabled Tel Aviv *Mossad* to Paris. "The agent [supreme commander] has made a categorical demand to bring [...through illegal immigration...] only for the draft. The agent demands to halt the immigration of even Exodus people until May, and to prefer trained personnel for the war effort. We have been warned that our operations will lose their funding, if immigration will not serve the war.

Confirm immediately."[45] "Our orders concerning the selection of immigrants for military roles only," they added in another telegram, "are not subject to any changes or modifications."[46]

"We have taken all available measures to ensure the execution of the severe order not to send [...] immigrants under 17 and over 35 years," the Paris office cabled back on the same day.[47] And so the operation of transporting the Foreign Draft to Palestine began, and on April 4th, 1948, the first draftees joined the IDF by special decree, that required immediate registration of new immigrants.[48]

The decision about selective (illegal) immigration did not pass without comment in the DP camps in Germany. Some Palestine envoys, able to identify with the plight of the DP, thought that such a step was unwise, no matter how serious the situation at home was. Anti-Semitism in Germany was on the rise, with the practical manifestation of violent German police "raids" on the DP Camps. The worsening situation brought concerned delegates of the *ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad* (United *Kibbutz* Movement) to write a letter to their leader, Yisrael Galili, who had co-signed the letter to Paris with Ben-Gurion in March. The *Kibbutz* envoys were expressing grave concerns: In addition to the changes in the *Ha'apaláh* operations, they were worried about the change of *Haganáh* goals: Initially it came to the camps in order to protect camp dwellers from potential dangers around them. Now, exactly at a moment when the DPs needed protection, the situation is reversed, as DPs are called for the rescue of Palestine, leaving the weak and helpless behind, unshielded. The *Kibbutz* envoys were very critical of these changes: "...You are surely aware of the latest political developments in Germany, namely, the plan of the Military Government in the western occupation zones to transfer authority to the Germans themselves. All of us share the fear that once this transfer is carried out, the situation of the Jews here will become intolerable. The Jews themselves, who until recently were not inclined, perhaps, to mass exodus from Germany [...] feel

today that their situation is worsened, and the demand to leave this cursed land is growing [...] we must admit that the Zionist movement—in its official capacity, at least—does not share the anxiety of the Jews (and ours). On the contrary: At this very moment, Jewish immigration has been cut down, and the current quotas fit neither the worsening of the situation here, nor the requirement of the political struggle at home. This cut down apparently stems from a genuine concern to the viability of the *Yishuv* during the war. Thus the argument is that only a small number of Jews who are incapable of carrying firearms can be brought in right now, otherwise they will become a burden on the defense. We are convinced—and hope that you share this conviction—that this argument is not right, and does not fit the realities at home. In our opinion, massive immigration of Jews is no less important than heroic defense by the *Haganáh* [...] We must add that the opinion of all those who are familiar with the Jewish camps in Germany is that one must not hope for a draft consisting large numbers of young people."[49] This letter of protest that the envoys sent captured the irony of the situation rather well. It did not lead to a change of policy. The weak—those unfit for the draft—were to remain in the camps, despite the dangers.

The Voluntary Draft Drive Ends in a Failure

On March 30th, 1948, just a few days after Nahum Shadmi's return to Europe with the new orders, the Third (and last) Congress of *She'erit ha-pleyta* in the American Zone of Germany took place in Bad-Reichenhal. It was a major event, and invitations detailing a rich and varied program were sent to a large number of prominent Jewish figures worldwide. The focus of the Congress, as expected, was the situation in Palestine—the UN Declaration of November 29th, 1947, the increase in hostilities, the imminent British exit, and the approaching declaration of statehood. Sitting on stage were not only members of the *Z.K.*

Prezidium, headed by David Treger, but also the Director of the Jewish Agency delegation to Germany, Dr. Hoffmann, and of course, Nahum Shadmi, representing *Haganáh*. David Treger greeted the delegates and read letters sent by various personalities and organizations, mostly from Palestine and the United States, who were unable to come to the Congress in person, and sent their greetings instead.[50] Next went the US Army representative, Colonel Scithers, and the Advisor on Jewish Affairs Professor Haber.[51] This was the ceremonial part of the Congress. Then the time came for the serious political speeches, delivered in English, Yiddish and Hebrew. Dr. Hoffmann reviewed the political struggle for statehood in Palestine, and went on to describe and analyze recent developments in the war. Finally, he called upon all DPs to immigrate to Palestine. At this point, Nahum Shadmi went to the podium and gave a speech in Yiddish to the delegates. "I come here in the name of *Haganáh*," he began. "In order to bring you the greetings of the Jewish heroes presently on guard, defending Jewish honor, and securing the *Yishuv* in Palestine." He presented a brief political and military analysis of the situation, which led to the conclusion that "therefore, every young man and woman, aged 18-35, must join the *Haganáh* whose role is to protect us from the Arabs, perhaps even from the British army. Everyone must be in the *Haganáh*—there are no excuses [...] All those capable, must mobilize and come to *Eretz Yisrael* and join the army."[52] Other speeches on the same topic followed. Comrade Rerter, for example (already drafted, the protocol said), repeated Shadmi's words, and proposed that "Jews who do not fulfill their duty and register, will be declared as deserters."

The deliberations lasted three days. Participants mainly discussed political issues: The struggle for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, the developing war there, and the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany. Summarizing the deliberations, Congress Chairman Engineer Nathan Frischmann read a long list of resolutions:

- The Third Congress of *She'erit ha-pleyta* sends its greetings to the *Yishuv*, standing firm in its struggle to establish a Jewish state;
- The Congress is pleased with the UN resolution of November 29th, 1947;
- The Congress supports the goals of the war, and the army, pleased with the prospect of the establishment of a Jewish government. We are DPs today, in the camps in Germany, and tomorrow—citizens of The Jewish State;
- The congress declares that *She'erit ha-pleyta* stands united with the *Yishuv* in *Eretz Yisrael*, who is fighting a war imposed on it, and it is mobilizing all forces necessary for victory;
- The Congress is imposing a *Giyus* registration duty on all men and women aged 17 to 35, who must make themselves available for the service of the people;
- The Congress decided that all *Giyus* dodgers who do not fulfill their duty will be removed from the social and political life and will be denied entry to all offices;
- The Congress calls upon *She'erit ha-pleyta* to participate in the defense enterprise—the fund for Jewish defense in *Eretz Yisrael*;
- Considering the dire situation [...] the Congress calls upon the world to let us leave Germany for *Eretz Yisrael* immediately.[53]

The resolutions of the Third Congress of *She'erit ha-pleyta* marked a new phase in the mobilization operation in the camps. They extended it, turning it into a general draft. All administrative entities were in place, and one experimental program was already working; cooperation among the different organizations was tight, as were control mechanisms. And so, the Zionists could begin recruiting, training and transferring a new type of draftee—the stateless survivor of the Jewish holocaust, of *She'erit ha-pleyta*, now residing in the temporary DP camps in Germany, Austria and Italy.

Despite all that, it was quite clear that the mobilization

operation would not be easy. In fact, the initial plan failed, and masses of volunteers were not recruited. Naturally, the DPs were not too eager for the draft, even though their immigration options ranged from limited to non-existent. "Most Jewish refugees who had been through the hell of the ghetto, slavery and death camps under the Nazis, Soviet forced-labor camps, and other disasters, yearn for some quiet place. Regardless of their views on current events in Palestine," wrote reporter and publicist DP, Moshé Ajzenbud, to a Bundist magazine in New York, "they feel physically drained, and have no desire to go into the fire again. They rightfully ask—even the Zionists among them—why do we, having been so pained and tortured, need to go back into the fire?"[54] The elevated tensions in the Arab-Jewish conflict increased doubts about *'aliyah*, and as a result, more camp dwellers distanced themselves from the Zionist movement, and became reluctant to be drafted or immigrate to Palestine. Reports of *Haganáh* leaders detail the failure of the first mobilization operation. "The recruitment of the first thousand was not easy" wrote Yehuda Ben-David, *Haganáh* deputy commander in Germany,[55] "In fact, **the organization succeeded to draft only 700 persons**" [emphasis added]. The meaning of this sad fact was clear to the envoys from Palestine: "The Jews of the camps," wrote Ben-David in another report, "are tough, uneducated human material, having lived on an allowance for a long time. They have some traces of organization and cohesion. They live with a strong sense of inferiority, having no choice other than *Eretz Yisrael*. Their acquaintance with Zionist values is limited and superficial."[56] A similar report was filed by envoys of the Gordonia-Young Maccabean youth movement in Austria: "All our teams have been put under the jurisdiction of the relevant institutions," reported the head of their delegation in late March. Yet "the mobilization operation among camp Jews is unsuccessful. It is simply difficult to describe how deep decadence runs in the camps, and how it is becoming worse daily." Observing differences among DP groups, the report

voiced an opinion similar to Advisor Haber's, to the effect that "there are some volunteers among the Romanian refugees, who have not yet rooted themselves in the camps, but for Polish Jews there is hardly any hope. The corruption of these Jews is so great, that they are totally uninterested in the people's campaign [in Palestine]. Recently, the JDC began registering people who would like to go to America, and hundreds of camp Jews have registered."[57]

9 Compulsory Conscription to the IDF

My younger brother Eliyahu
Before you go to the next war think
About the last war or I will tell you
How our grandfather on Mother's side pulled
All his teeth out just so that he would not go
To their war. My younger brother Eliyahu
Do not go to their war.

Yitzhak La'or (*An Evil Mind Speaks*, 1983)[1]

"Zirkular Nr. 31"

The failure of the first mobilization initiative forced the organizers to change policy. Ever since the Third Congress had been adjourned in early April, events were occurring at a rapid pace. Activists were beginning to cash in on the power they had accumulated in the camps, taking advantage of the administrative apparatus they had built. *Haganáh* personnel were now working only on the draft, abandoning all other goals they had set for themselves, including their original purpose—to provide security to camp dwellers. Despite the new anti-Semitic threats, *Haganáh* people were now focused on one thing: The mobilization and drafting of as many youths as they could find, and their transfer to Palestine, so that they could join the fighting forces. Moreover, the previous failure pushed them to a change of view, thereby legitimizing more radical measures: They now decided that "the recruitment of Jews in the camps in Germany and in Europe in general, is a foreign draft and is not defined as volunteering." As a result, reports *Haganáh* man Yehuda Ben-David, "Some sort of 'siege' was imposed on the camps, and a feeling that everyone must join the draft prevailed. Up to this point,

there was no strict enforcement, yet there were pressure and an atmosphere of a draft that was instilled by local commanders. It is this atmosphere that later brought the thousands who immigrated as soldiers."[2] This brought about the final, most successful phase of the draft: Forced conscription of DPs to the emerging Israel Defense Force.

This operation involved everyone: The *Haganáh*, the *Z.K.* apparatus, and the Jewish Agency delegation (soon to become the Israeli Consular Mission in Munich), all dedicated their resources to the task. They also harnessed the regional committees and camp committees. "The matters of the war at home were a top priority of *She'erit ha-pleyta,"* wrote Dr. Hoffmann (now Yahil) in 1949 in his final report on the activities of the Palestine Delegation in the DP camps in Germany. "All its energy, and all the abilities of the [Jewish Agency] delegation concentrated on the two central tasks: Recruiting people for the war, and gathering resources. Delegation members began organizing volunteers while I was in Palestine, and upon my return I found 700 men ready to volunteer for the service of the people," he wrote euphemistically. "At this point, we decided on extending the operation. The *Haganáh* European command gave us a quota of 3,000 conscripts. Initially, we doubted our ability to reach this number, but we nonetheless began." Hoffmann's description of the course of events, though written in 1949, agrees with the picture emergent from the contemporary documentary record: "A *Merkaz le-Sheyrut ha-'Am* (Center for the Service of the People) was established," he wrote, "comprising of envoys from Palestine and representatives of the *Z.K.*, and local *Giyus* committees were selected everywhere, directed by the local or regional [Palestine] envoy. Every man and woman, unmarried or married without children, up to the age of 35 was obliged. Only children, burdened with older parents, were exempted. All other requests for exemption or deferral had to be referred to *ha-Merkaz le-Sheyrut ha-'Am* where a final decision was made."[3]

By its very nature, obligatory conscription is not acceptable

to everyone. Even in Palestine, whose mostly Zionist population felt threatened by the pending attack of the Arab armies, there were evasions. All the more so in the DP camps, where morale was already low, mental attrition strong, and Zionist sentiment weak. Asked to go fight on foreign territory and in a foreign language, camp dwellers were hesitant. No wonder, then, that many refused, and the initial draft drive failed. For the operation to succeed, new and more severe measures had to be introduced.

And so, at the beginning of the next phase, pressure was exerted on those refusing to mobilize, to ensure registration and mobilization. This mode of action was consistent with the proposals and resolutions of the Third Congress, which called for the imposition of sanctions on those failing to fulfill "their national duty." A first step was to grant broader authorities to local *Giyus* committees, whose composition had been determined, in many cases, by *Z.K.* representative. The next step was but natural: *Z.K.* leaders decided to take direct action against all those who were under their jurisdiction. Previously established channels made a dramatic gesture possible. The *Z.K.* thus dispatched the following circular to lower committees on April 11th, 1948, demanding speedy action:

Z.K. Organization Department Munich, 4.11.1948

Zirkular Nr. 31

To the Jewish Committee in _____

This is to inform you of the following decisions of the *Z.K. prezidium*, which must be carried out at once:

1. In accordance with the intense explanatory effort done in all locations through the "Committees for the Service of the People", you are required now to help and support the Committees and assist them in every way you can to carry out their job.

2. In accordance with the resolutions of the Third Congress of *She'erith ha-pleyta* we demand, first of all, of elected members of the first rank, of the Regional Committees, the local committees, in the comptroller's departments etc., of ages 17-35 to mobilize to the service of the people by 4.15.1948. **In case a member will not accept his national obligation, he will have to leave**

his position on 4.15.1948.

At the same time, all local committees are required to send the Organization Department an accurate list of all the elected persons and workers, together with their dates of birth by 4.25.1948. The committees bear full responsibility to carry out these tasks.

Zentral Komitet

Office Manager — H. Rechtman

Organization Department — H. Goldberg[4]

Discipline was good: Regional and camp committees obeyed, rushing to respond. "Regarding *Zirkular nr. 31,* point 2, we are sending you an accurate list of all the workers in our town," wrote Camp Committee Schwabach immediately, obediently enclosing a list of 15 names and Dates Of Birth.[5] Camp Attel also responded at once: "In accordance with your *Zirkular Nr. 31* we have required the appropriate persons [...] to register to *Giyus* at once." They enclosed a detailed list of names and occupations, adding that "Comrade Levi Ferenc has not yet registered. His excuse is that he is the representative of the Revisionist Party in the Camp Committee, and that he did not know that he had to be drafted," they said. "On the basis of the *zirkular* we have suspended Comrade Levi Ferenc from his membership in our Committee." Their letter, signed by both Camp Committee and *Giyus* Committee, saluted the addressees "*Mit zions grus*" (with the greetings of Zion).[6]

Compulsory Conscription: Draft-Deserter-DPs

The steps taken to draft members of Camp Committees were but the first snowballs that preceded an avalanche. Morale in the camps was low, and as the draft actions broadened, the number of DP who were reluctant to join the fighting forces in remote Palestine increased. As a consequence, measures against dodgers were escalated, marking the beginning of the final phase of the draft operation: Compulsory conscription, carried out with the use of violence, when necessary. The *Z.K.*, now comman-

deered by the *Giyus* committees, used all the power it had: Employees were fired, residents were evicted from their apartments, others were fined, or denied the supplementary food rations that the JDC was distributing to all camp Jews; others were simply beaten up. These are not isolated cases, where "overzealous recruiters switched from convincing to forced convincing to force," against whom "even the *Z.K.* was helpless," as one historian described this affair, in an attempt to trivialize it.[7] It was the *Z.K.* itself, acting together with envoys of all the organizations from Palestine, that took initiative and were responsible for the operation that was conceived by Shadmi, approved by Ben-Gurion and the Third Congress in March, and directed from above by Shadmi and Hoffmann. Violent incidents were numerous: The archives are replete with hundreds of official documents describing brutal methods and actions carried out in an identical manner in a large number of camps in Germany and Austria, taking place mostly between March and August 1948. The archives also contain testimony and affidavits about "waves of Zionist harassment" in the camps,[8] as well as vile descriptions, coming from various camps, of forced removal of Jews objecting to the draft from Camp Committees, arrests, and beatings. In a camp near Ulm, for example, "a father of *Giyus* evader Wecker was beaten up, as was the father of one who did not register; in another case an old father—Richter Aizik, was beaten because his son Moshé Richter did not register for the *Giyus*."[9]

We have in front of us a second critical moment in the transition period between Liberation and the establishment of the State of Israel. The first, it will be recalled, was the children's affair in 1945, in which the Zionists prevented the removal of child survivors to England and France, lest it weaken the pressure to open the gates of Palestine for Jews. The second critical event that we see occurred in a brief, yet powerful moment which puts a whole era to the test. In a short six months one can observe the maturation of a conflict of a peculiar kind. Not merely a dispute between two political parties, it is a clash

between two very distinct varieties of Jewish nationalism: Zionist interests are interpreted and implemented by recruiters in the DP camps, taking it for granted that all stateless Jews are committed to the Zionist endeavor; however, there are other views of Jewish nationalism, which do not involve Palestine. These are maintained by thousands of Displaced Persons, who make immigration plans to target countries other than Palestine, never abandoning the hope of having a full-fledged Jewish life. The Zionist movement has traveled full circle: Originally defining the creation of a safe haven to all Jews as its ultimate goal, it now took an important turn. It capitalized on Jewish identity, and in its name it now felt justified in expropriating the national rights of non-Zionist Jews, and harnessing them forcefully to its own cause. In the conflict that ensued, there could only be one winner—the side capable of using institutional violence.

Realizing this contradiction, perhaps, certain Zionists attempted to describe the events somewhat differently. Back in Jerusalem, Dr. Hoffmann could later recount the tale more positively: "Once again, *She'erith ha-pleyta* revealed its beauty and Zionist zeal," he wrote in his retrospective final report, "an atmosphere of a draft and of public scrutiny was created in the camps, which honored the parents of the recruits and put shame on dodgers, up to a point where a young man had a hard time walking around the camp."[10]

This description is a vast understatement. The discrepancy between it and the actual course of the events emerges from the documentary record. Some examples will make this point clear. The Committee managing Camp Rochelle, a middle-sized camp (with about 1,800 residents in 1948),[11] took the necessary steps against draft evaders subsequent to receiving *Zirkular Nr. 31*. The *Giyus* Commission in the camp, whose authority was virtually unlimited, was handing down orders to the Camp Committee itself regarding daily activities. A nearby *kibbutz* group, *Chafetz Chayim*, which the Camp Committee had been supporting, was from now on to be denied aid on orders of the *Giyus* Commission,

because it was home of an orthodox *Agudath Yisrael yeshiva* whose pupils were trying to evade the draft.[12] The Camp *Prezidium* was likewise ordered to fire several workers:[13]

To the Jewish Committee
In Camp Rochelle

We hereby inform you of the decision of the Committee for the Service of the People, to the effect that the following people cannot be employed in their present work places:

1. Goldstein Maniek (shops)
2. Gorland Moshé (tailor shop)
3. Zilber Chayim (tailor shop)
4. Armeiner Hans (director of sports club)
5. Hor Moshé (secretary of the League)

We demand that you carry out these instructions immediately.

(-)

Commission for the Service of the People 30.3.48

In a subsequent Camp Committee meeting it was thus decided that *Agudath Yisrael* people deserve no special treatment.[14]

In the same camp, Brickman Binyamin, Golda Katz, Goldminzer Yosef and Proshovitch Avraham were fired for refusing to register for the draft.[15] The Commission, however, thought these measures were insufficient, and demanded to withhold the JDC supplementary food rations from those fired:[16]

Commission for the Service of the People in Camp Rochelle

Please note that when handing out the Joint rations to tailors and knitters for the months March-April, you should not hand out the rations for the second half of April to persons who had been fired from their jobs on the 15.4 by the Giyus Commission.

(-)

Commission for the Service of the People 28.5.48

The same commission meted out fines to DPs who failed to register on time:[17]

Jewish Committee in Rochelle
To the Chief of Police in Rochelle
Following an appeal from the Giyus Commission, we have approved a punishment to the following persons, for not making themselves available to the Giyus Commission:

1. Zilshtajn Mordecai	100marks	bloc 33
2. Shershnjevska Fania	200marks	bloc 28
3. Zilberberg Mania	100marks	bloc 38

These sums should be handed over to the Jewish Committee in Rochelle.

(-)

Chair—Ayerweiss Secretary—Puterman
Rochelle 20.5.48

Food sanctions had to be imposed with caution. Purveyors of extra calories were the relief workers of the Joint Distribution Committee, who did the best they could to steer clear from politics. Their mission since World War I had been to help Jews in trouble. They now feared that if the Military Government would perceive them as taking sides in the internal political dispute, their freedom of action would be curtailed. Many among their personnel also objected to the violent methods for simple humanistic reasons. The JDC establishments thus neither approved nor permitted a punitive use of the food rations it was procuring. For such measures to succeed, secrecy was necessary. The *Z.K.* found a solution: Camp Committees were instructed to deny JDC workers access to their warehouses, so that the exact number of recipients, and quantities in stock (which were constantly changing) would not be disclosed.[18] These food rations, then, were under complete control of the *Giyus* commissions. Later, special "Sanctions Commissions" were established in the camps, and enforcement methods became more institutionalized.[19]

The demand made by the *Z.K.* in early April, to send lists of names of potential recruits did not skip Camp Eschwege, near Rochelle. The Jewish Committee there instructed all group leaders in work places it controlled, to provide on that very day an

accurate list of workers, so that the *Giyus* Commission would be able to carry out its orders.[20] There were members of the Jewish Bund in the camp who, not being Zionist, were immediately fired, whereas others were denied medical treatment.[21] Interestingly, the *Giyus* commissions were non-discriminating in their draft drive. Functionaries of the *Z.K.* themselves received mobilization orders, which contained the same explicit threats: Whoever fails to register for the draft, the orders said, would be fired at once.[22] But in Feldafing, site of the initial experiment, matters became more and more complicated. Despite the early start, the camp was lagging behind the quotas it had been assigned. Concerned about the poor turnout, the Camp Committee decided the following in early June: "Our camp is lagging behind. It was decided: 1) to evict those who failed to register from their apartments; 2) to remove those who failed to fulfill their duty from the jobs."[23] These resolutions were carried out. Again, the documentary record to that effect, discovered through archival search, is rich, with many orders to fire, deprive of rations, and other forms of punishment to large numbers of individuals.[24] These measures were insufficient, however. In June a new proposal was made, that would increase efficiency: The Camp Committee was requested to enable the *Giyus* Commission to hand down orders to the various executive departments directly.[25] The Camp Committee obediently relinquished authority. It sent a letter saying that "the Camp Directorate decided to endow broad authority to the *Giyus* Commission, which is now to make independent decisions. It is therefore unnecessary to turn to the *Prezidium* regarding the *Giyus*.[26] Recruiters now had a free hand. No time was wasted—violence was used, and black lists as well as *schandelisten* (shame lists) of the "dodgers" were publicized.[27]

Organizers of the draft did not skip Nei Freimann, that German camp discussed in Chapter seven. There, too, everyone was called in. Like all others, school teachers were ordered to register, among them Jakob Celnik, whose personal story illus-

trates the forces at work. Celnik, it will be recalled, was a teacher of art and physical education in the Nei Freimann Jewish Public School. Unlike many others who registered and then immigrated, he was reluctant to do so. His reasons are unknown: Perhaps he was afraid; maybe he was hoping to find a new life in another country; or, he might have even been opposed to the Zionist cause. At any rate, in March 1948 he decided to join the Bund. He filled out forms where he wrote his age (33), his birthplace (Warsaw); he also wrote that he had no family, that he was a locksmith, and that he spent the war in a concentration camp.[28] He apparently believed that a Bund membership card would bring him closer to getting an immigration visa to the United States—there were rumors in the camps in those days, that the Bund had the power and ability to obtain such visas for its members.[29] Be that as it may, Jakob Celnik clearly did not want to be drafted to the Israeli military. Thus steps were taken against him, too: The employment office of the Nei Freimann branch of the main UN relief agency (whose local employees were DPs, that followed the *Giyus* Commission directions) sent the School the following letter:

P.C.I R O.Area VI
Employment-Office
Naj-Frajman-Siedlung.

Naj-Frajman, 22.August.1948

Cu di Direkcion fun Folkszule in Naj-Frajman.

Culib dem/wos der Herr C E L N I K J A K O B hot zich niszt gesztelt cum Gijus wert er entzagt als Lerer fun di Folkszule in Naj-Frajman.

P.C.IRO.AREA.VI
EMPLOYMENT-OFFICE.
NAJ-FRAJMAN-SIEDLUNG.

~~P.C.IRO.AREA VI~~
~~JEWISH COMITEE~~
NEU-FREIMANN-SIEDLUNG
EMPLOYMENT-OFFICE

Nei Freimann, 22.8.1948

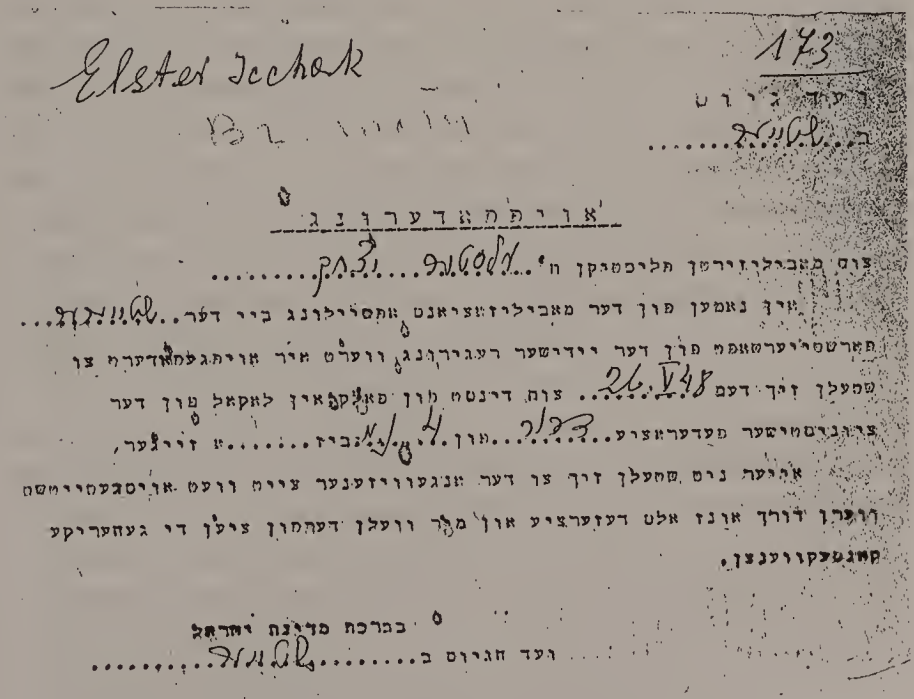
PCIRO Zone VI
Employment Office
Nei Freimann

To the directorate of the public school, Nei Freimann

Due to the fact that Mr. Celnik Jakob has failed to mobilize to *GIJUS* [draft] he is fired [from his job] as a teacher in the Public School in Nei Freimann.

(-)
Employment Committee
Nei Freimann[30]

Austrian camp committees took the draft just as seriously. In Camp Styer, for example, DP Elster Yitzhak received a form letter which apparently was distributed by recruiters in various places. It was a mobilization order signed by the "Jewish Government" (an unusual way to denote the Government of Israel). Sent to a DP in Austria, it is worded as if the addressee is a citizen of the newly declared state:[31]



***Giyus* Commission**
In Styer

Demand

To mobilize comrade *Elster Yitzhak*.

In the name of the mobilization department of the representative body of the Jewish Government in *Styer*, you are required to appear on *26.5.48* to the service of the people in the Hall of the Zionist Federation Dror from 4pm until ____.

Your failure to appear in that time will be interpreted by us as desertion, and we shall take the appropriate steps.

Greetings of the State of Israel
The *Giyus* Commission in *Styer*

This order was a direct outcome of a series of resolutions of the Styer Commission in connection with the draft. These resolutions enabled the Commission to use threatening language, define those failing to report as "deserters" and conclude with an overt threat—to use *geherike conseqvenzn* [appropriate measures] against all those who disobey. The resolutions the Camp Committee gave it the power: It had been decided "to remove draftees from their work, together with all those not yet registered for *'aliyáh* [...] Those not working will be denied the JDC rations."[32] Later, the Committee would evict "deserters" from their apartments,[33] and apply a broad variety of sanctions against them.[34] Some of these activities were described in detail by an envoy from Palestine: "How do you draft this kind of material?" he asked rhetorically, expressing his despair, "Talk to them? Whatever could be said has been. Well then, sanctions: You throw them out of party chapters [...] publish their names in a black list, fire from work [...] The result is an increase in trade [in the black market]. From retailers they are made big wholesale traders."[35]

The violent affair was aptly described by a historian of the *Freiland Lige* (a Jewish territorialist group, aiming at national, autonomous Jewish settlement in various locations worldwide):

> The actions against us, against Bundists and in general, against Jews who desired to immigrate to countries

> other than *Eretz Yisrael*, manifested in continuous pressure. They took provisions from us, threw us out of our work places, evicted from camps, beat us up (in May street fights, called '*Boyufkes*' were organized in Salzburg—groups of thugs and hooligans ('*shleyger brigades*') came to teach all traitors and deserters a lesson). In remote camps people escaped through windows directly to the office of the American CIC, and the shameful resolution was annulled only after the American military command interfered.[36]

It was indeed "unbelievable," as an editorial in the Paris-based Bundist organ *Unser Shtime* (Our Voice) read, "that Jews, the standard victims of Fascism and terrorism, would be capable of the kinds of violence Zionists in the camps exercise toward their Bundist and other non-Zionist political rivals."[37]

The Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the American Supreme Commander, Professor William Haber, also tried to tell the story in a routine report he submitted to his senders, the "Five Jewish Organizations" in New York. Written a few weeks after the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 15th, his report dryly notes these violent acts: "At first," he wrote, "the pressure exerted on the people was crude, at times reflecting techniques they had learned from their own oppressors." He then concluded, somewhat optimistically: "This activity was bound to become known to the military authorities, which announced that they would not support compulsory deeds of any kind."[38]

Haber's optimistic predictions were incorrect. The violent acts were to continue uninterrupted for several months, and ceased only at the end of the draft and the tax collection, towards the end of 1948. If one may judge this operation by its outcome, the methods used by the organizers paid off: Contrary to the voluntary draft in early spring, that managed to bring in a mere 700 volunteers, the compulsory draft was a success, as the number of new recruits increased eleven fold. Dr. Hoffmann could proudly present the successful operation in his final report:

> The draft operation continued through all spring and summer months, its yield—7,800 draftees from Germany and all its regions, including 4 members of the *Z.K.*[39]

And thus, sometime in the fall of 1948, the organizers could sit back, as a successful operation was reaching its conclusion. *She'erith ha-pleyta*—the Surviving Remnant of the Jewish holocaust—made a contribution to the foundation of the Jewish state just born in Western Palestine. Having survived the Nazi ovens, they were brought to the heart of the Israeli melting pot—the newly founded Israel Defense Force.

10 War and Immigration: The Aftermath

"What are we doing here?"
"This is our homeland. Don't you know that this is our homeland?"
"I do, but to tell you the truth, I'm not particularly happy or sad."

Aharon Appelfeld (*Michvat ha-'Or*, 1980)[1]

The DPs at War

DPs were drafted to the Israel Defense Force by the *Haganáh* mission in Europe, whose men and women worked in close collaboration with the *Z.K.* and the Jewish Agency office in Germany. Recruitment continued in full swing subsequent to the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel on May 15th, 1948. Yet now, recruiters were no longer members of a semi-clandestine paramilitary organization. Rather, they were officers of the IDF (led by Lieutenant Colonel David Reshef); conscripts were likewise not transferred in secret, nor were they carrying British immigration documents. They entered through the main door, equipped with visas issued by official representatives of the sovereign State of Israel at the Munich Consulate (where Jewish Agency's Dr. Hoffmann now became Consul General).[2] Draftees arrived by boat to the Haifa port, were often taken directly to a recruitment center, where they were issued uniforms, dog tags, and other necessary accessories. The draft in Germany continued and in fact intensified after May 15th, at times in violation of orders issued by the Allied Military Governor. An official paper authorizing Palestine immigration in early July—just as the first cease-fire there was going into

effect—contained an explicit stipulation that prohibited the migration of potential draftees or military personnel. The Israelis were instructed to neither issue entry visas to such individuals, nor transport them to Palestine.[3] Still, the pressing need for manpower for the army at war dictated a continued draft, and new conscripts were secretly shipped to recruitment and training centers. Whether they arrived through *Haganáh* training camps in Europe, or sent to Israel directly from the DP camps, these men and women were drafted immediately upon arrival, sometimes assigned to combat units with minimal training, and given little time to get their bearings.[4] As they came under IDF command, DPs from Germany and Austria joined the ranks of *Gachal*, the Foreign Draft (*Giyus Chutz La-'aretz*), and here they were mixed with new arrivals from elsewhere—Romania, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia, France and Maghreb countries.[5] Curiously, country of origin was crucial to the determination of the status of foreign draftees. The IDF maintained two "foreign" units during the war: *Gachal*—the Foreign Draft—and *Machal* (Foreign Volunteers), which consisted of fighters who arrived from the strong English-speaking Western democracies, the United States, Canada, England and South Africa.[6] This distinction was no mere accident; while *Gachal* recruits were conscripted, *Machal* fighters came to Palestine out of their own free will, and received special treatment: The IDF gave them high wages, put them up in hotels and treated them with respect. Unlike *Gachal* conscripts, *Machal* soldiers did not even pledge their allegiance to the IDF in a binding sort of way. Taken to be volunteers, they were only asked to make a statement that read: "As long as I participate as a volunteer in the War of Independence of the People of Israel in its land, I pledge and commit myself to unconditionally abide by the disciplinary code of the Israel Defense Forces."[7]

This discrimination, which Holocaust survivors now turned into IDF soldiers naturally found offensive, was bitterly described years later, in 1978, by *Gachal* recruit Dov Shilansky,

who made these remarks in an Israeli *Knesset (parliament)* address, of which he was now the Speaker:

> And here, a group of people who had finally arrived to their homeland after the horrors of the Holocaust and went into combat were called *Gachal*. That was the first slap in the face. Others who came from the United States and South Africa were called *Machal*—volunteers, while those who had shown endless dedication and self-sacrifice were called recruits.[8]

Discriminated against or not, the Foreign Draft, of which DPs constituted a significant part, played a role in the war. As a first step in reconstructing its role, I conducted a demographic survey. Such a picture requires a method to measure the contribution of the forced DP draft in the camps to the war effort in 1948. While this is not easily done, as Foreign Draft records do not distinguish the European DPs from other immigrant draftees, some indirect estimates are instrumental in the reconstruction.

A first available figure pertains to the total number of Foreign Draftees. During January-July 1948, this unit contributed 20,239 men and women to the IDF. This rather impressive figure illustrates how the severe manpower shortage (noted in Chapter 8) was alleviated. It appears in the final report filed by the *Haganáh* European Theater Commander, Nahum Shadmi, the man who saw from afar and planned for such a recruitment operation, and whose report concludes thus: "This operation marked the end of the *Haganáh* mission in Europe, whose essence had been to turn the survivors among Europe Jewry who were capable of fighting, into an organized, focused force, and direct them to the battlefields of *Eretz Yisrael*."[9] In July, the training bases in Europe, which now held 4,300 new conscripts, were handed over to the IDF mission. These men and women were shipped to Israel immediately.[10]

A second figure that is crucial for our demographic picture

pertains to the draft drive in the German and Austrian DP camps: The forced conscription obtained at least 7,800 soldiers. This is gleaned from the final report to the Jewish Agency that Dr. Hoffmann filed in 1949.[11] Thus, the DP camp conscripts accounted for nearly 40 percent of the Foreign Draft forces. We shall return to this figure later on in this chapter.

Foreign Draft soldiers were sent as reinforcement to depleted combat units upon their arrival in Israel.[12] At first, they were treated with the measure of suspicion normally reserved for foreigners. Later, as troops realized that these were actually good, dedicated and much needed fighters, they became more open, as can be seen from this description of Yitzhak Rabin's *Har'el* brigade:

> After the 'Burma Route' to Jerusalem was opened, Foreign Draft men would be sneaking into our unit in larger and smaller groups. They would each come with a rifle and a helmet, bringing one 3-inch mortar shell along. Our depleted ranks were replenished. Names like Grish'ka, Yash'ka, Sash'ka. Some had served in the Red Army—had, anyway, spent time in Russia [...] Zivi, our commander, who spoke no Yiddish, was trying his best. He pointed to the village and said: "*Dos, Tzuba, m'nemt*" [this, Tzuba, we take it]. Before the attack, they would be shouting: "*Za Rudina, za Stalina, za Ben-Guriona*" [...] and then followed with juicy swear words in Russian, aimed at the enemy. This foreign swearing would become ours at times, as we Sabras realized that our Hebrew had not yet matured into having strong language befitting intense situations like war. But now we heard the right tone and hue coming from a most reliable source.[13]

The Foreign Draft was important to the war effort. Some of its soldiers were killed in battle, others died unknown, having had neither a home nor a family to come back to. Their stories will forever remain untold. Others did leave families abroad: "To the Landsberg Camp Committee," writes Secretary

Jacobson of the Israeli Consulate in Munich, "We hereby request to deliver the enclosed letter to Mrs. Esther Guttmann, notifying her of the regrettable death of her son, Joseph, who fell in Jerusalem on October 28, 1948."[14] Officials had to fulfill such sad assignments not infrequently, as the collection of letters in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs archive reveals: "The Israeli Ministry of Defense is in possession of a package containing the personal effects of fallen soldier Yitzhak Wolf." Wrote the secretary to the Jewish Community Committee of Karlsruhe. "Please let us know whether his parents still reside at the following address..."

Israeli historians Emmanuel Sivan and Ya'acov Markovietzky independently calculated the relative contribution of Foreign Draft members to the war effort. They did so by comparing death rates in the Foreign Draft to those among *Yishuv* soldiers.[15] The results both arrived at are similar: Of 100,000 IDF soldiers in May-July 1948, around 20,000 (about 20 percent) were Foreign Draft (another 4,000 were Foreign Volunteers). Yet of a total of 4,517 soldiers killed in battle in 1948, only about 250 came from the Foreign Draft. That is less than 5 percent of the casualties. In other words, the toll that *Yishuv* soldiers—those drafted locally—took was four times as heavy as the Foreign Draft.

Returning to the figures we had for DPs earlier, namely, that they accounted for about 40 percent of the Foreign Draft, and assuming homogeneity of casualties (that is, that DPs and other immigrants were as likely to be killed), then of the 7,800 men recruited in the camps during the March-October 1948 draft drive, about 100 were killed. This result makes sense: It is very likely that undertrained immigrants were sent directly to the battlefield only under extreme conditions, hence the lives of such soldiers, merely by virtue of their poor training, may have been generally less at risk.

Emmanuel Sivan actually makes a further distinction that indicates that very recent immigrants were at a lower risk: He

shows that the percentage of fallen in battle among Palestine soldiers was 5.6 percent, and that the rate among immigrant soldiers who had arrived to Palestine in 1940-47 is similar—5.1 percent; yet among 1948 Foreign Draft immigrants death rates are significantly lower—1.4 percent.

Casualties among Foreign Draft men, then, were relatively small, despite the long-standing myth to the contrary, to the effect that hundreds, maybe even thousands, of Foreign Draft soldiers died without being capable of even firing a single shot. This myth is false. Still, tragic incidents like the notorious battle for Latrun, where the Foreign Draft did suffer heavy casualties, contributed to build it. It was a sad event: Major General Shlomo Shamir, commander of the famous Brigade 7 that was the spearhead of the battle, counted 17 dead among 1948 immigrants, about 12 percent of a total of 139 dead in Latrun.[16] This is indeed double the overall rate of Foreign Draft casualties (and by this calculation, 5.5 percent of all casualties), but it is not that high. Still, it was rumored that hundreds of immigrants died there, caught with their rifle safeties locked. The source of these rumors seems clear: On the night between May 24th and 25th, 1948, Battalion 72 of Brigade 7 was in trouble, its commanding officers having made bad decisions. Company B suffered the most, having been ambushed that night. The company commander was wounded in this battle, and the soldiers, who could not even understand Hebrew orders, dispersed. In the morning, 23 battalion soldiers were dead, 15 of them from company B. Tragically, eight of company B's casualties were Foreign Draftees who had arrived from Romania a mere nine days earlier:[17]

> I remember the scene on the ridge [...] and I remember a fierce attack, a group of Arabs approaching the wounded, and our men being shelled [...] I began my descent and met one of the soldiers [...] lying there, shaken and frightened. He did not speak Hebrew, this I recall with certainty. I don't remember his name. Now thirst

> began to haunt us, as it was a very hot day. I'm not sure, but I think his water canteen was empty. I joined him and we lay there, on the ground, as the Jordanian Legionnaires' attack on our men continued.[18]

Foreign Draft men thus did get killed at Latrun, but not in great numbers; a few were even left lying wounded in the scorching sun, begging in Yiddish for help and water. This terrible experience was articulated in Aryeh Sivan's famous poem that juxtaposed the Holocaust and the battle for Latrun. *"Yet water was there galore,"* he wrote, *"Of thirst, no Jew died in Auschwitz or in Sóbibor."* Overall, however, the casualties among Foreign Draftees were not high, and most of them fortunately survived the war. We do not know what paths their lives took afterwards.

Populating Strategies: A Hierarchy of Jewish Weakness

The story of the DP draft in 1948 provides important clues to an understanding of the strategies that the Zionists employed in order to increase the size of the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine. A major contributing factor to the overall Zionist victory was the ability of organizers to bring about a demographic change. In part, this was accomplished through the mobilization of Jews to Palestine/Israel. This change was a result of careful planning, coupled with circumstance. The DP affair is thus part of a broader strategy, devised in keeping with Ben-Gurion's dictum about the significance of demography.

From the 1930s on, it was generally agreed that three strategic resources were required in order to make the Zionist vision of an independent Jewish state a reality: *Capital, political power in the international arena,* and *human resources.* At the end of World War II, the Zionist leadership was nearing its goal: Financial support was received from the established Jewish

communities of the West; international political power was gained through wise diplomatic moves. Resources for the enhancement of the Jewish population of Palestine, however, turned out to be much more difficult to secure. Millions of Jews living in the East as well as the West were set within their own traditions, relatively comfortable where they were (or at least sufficiently complacent so as to stay put), hence unlikely to be made to move to a new national entity, still in its pre-formative stages, and soon to be at war with its neighbors.

The goal Ben-Gurion had set—to increase the count of Jews in Palestine, that on Independence Day was just over 600,000—was not easy to accomplish. The "good human material," desperately needed by the Jewish *Yishuv* in Palestine, was not flocking in at a promising rate. The Zionist leadership thus had to set its *'aliyáh* priorities, and decide on a population of choice on which to focus. A hierarchy among Jewish communities had to be established, so that resource allocation and *modus operandi* could be set: Organizers now had to determine whom they should target first.

This situation was not new. An act of prioritizing had to be made at least once before (though under different circumstances), as a consequence of the imposition of quotas on the immigration of Jews into Palestine by the British Mandatory Government. While the Government set the number, the allocation of certificates was left to the Jewish Agency to determine. Early on, the distribution of certificates to potential immigrants in different Jewish communities required no major decision, as demand for them in the early 1930s hardly exceeded availability. Allocation was made by country of origin, and since Poland asked for more, it received the majority of certificates. In Germany, by comparison, there was little interest in Palestine immigration: During the years 1920-1932, a mere 2,000 Jews made *'aliyáh* from this country.[19]

The Nazi rise to power forced Zionists to consolidate a strategy regarding *'aliyáh* priorities. The dangers lurking about

the Jews of Germany changed the demand for certificates: In the last four months of 1933 alone, 4,500 Jewish immigrants arrived from Germany to Palestine. The *Eretz Yisrael* Bureau in Berlin was flooded with thousands of requests, and until 1941, when the doors were sealed shut, an estimated 55,000 German Jews immigrated to Palestine.[20] It was at this juncture that decisions had to be made. High demand for immigration and small quotas forced Zionist planners to form a policy of selective immigration—to establish an order of preference among *'aliyáh*-seeking Jews. Interestingly, instead of revising the allocation ratios and increasing the number of certificates for Germany at the expense of Poland, the Zionists chose a different strategy: They kept the ratio virtually unchanged, while creating a selection sieve for German Jews. In his comprehensive study, Daniel Frankel shows how the Zionist leadership, now charged with the task of creating an explicit immigration policy, not only allotted relatively few certificates to the persecuted Jews of Germany during the mid-to-late 1930s (leaving most for Poland); it also set rigid immigration criteria for German Jews, explicitly designed to meet the needs of the *Yishuv* in Palestine, rather than those of the besieged German Jewish community. Among other things, these criteria dictated that most immigration certificates be granted to healthy candidates under 35 years of age, even though the majority of German Jews (and certainly the needy among them) were older.[21]

When forced to make a selective immigration policy in the 1930s, then, the leadership established criteria that fit the profile of the Jewish immigrant to the needs of the Zionist movement, and not vice versa. The best and most useful immigrants were naturally the strongest: Accepted were activists with a Zionist conviction, people of financial means, and healthy youths—17-35 year olds, who had passed the medical screening successfully. The high demand for immigration certificates among German Jews affected the more vulnerable among them adversely, as a hierarchy was established, in which the strongest were on top.

At war's end, a new post-Holocaust order of importance among potential immigrants had to be established. While circumstances changed, the "multitudes of Jews to populate *Eretz Yisrael*" that Ben-Gurion had hoped for were not in sight. The urgent Zionist need for immigrants came at a time where there was little interest in Palestine immigration among Jews in the Western democracies—the Catskills were more luring than the Upper Galilee and its rolling hills. The reality, in which Jewish residents of strong and stable Jewish communities in the West were not opting for Palestine immigration, forced Zionist organizers to focus their priorities and turn to populations which would be more likely to immigrate. As European Jews were generally preferred to those residing in Arab countries (the latter being perceived as to be "composed of difficult human material—its cultural level is low"),[22] the stateless and homeless Surviving Remnant—the weakest of all Jews at the time—now became the prime candidates for Palestine immigration. Similar to pre-war Germany, then, a hierarchy among Jewish groups that were considered as targets for immigration was established, yet now the order was reversed: It was now to the *weakest* communities that organizers diverted their attention, in an attempt to turn them into "the anvil on which revolt against the British would be forged," as Ben-Gurion's visionary words had dictated. Top candidates for Palestine immigration were now the stateless Jews of *She'erit ha-pleyta* (who immediately after Liberation were not thinking about the Palestine option seriously, as we have seen), and not the citizens of Western democracies. *B'richáh* agents thus went to organize Jews who were fleeing from fear of renewed pogroms in Poland, whereas *Mossad*, Jewish Agency, and other Palestine envoys went to Germany in order to organize the DPs around the Zionist banner.

It is clear that these envoys, and the Palestine *Yishuv* that was behind them, were genuinely concerned with alleviating the suffering of the Survivors; but at the same time, planners had a

vested demographic interest: Both citizens and soldiers for the army were urgently needed. It would appear, then, that the Zionist desire to help coincided with their need for immigrants. As we have seen, however, at times of conflict, the needs of nation building in Palestine were taken to override those of the DPs. In addition to the evidence we have seen, an incident that took place in 1948 emphasizes this conclusion rather poignantly. In particular, it helps us examine the conduct of the Zionist leadership at a juncture where the Jews in the DP camps were in danger, but sending them to Palestine was against Zionist interest at the moment.

A sharp rise in anti-Semitism in Germany was recorded in 1948, apparently due to the beginning of a process in which the Allies transferred authority back to the Germans. The first step was local elections, which led to a Nazi resurgence, as some newly elected mayors were old Nazis. In these towns, anti-Semitic sentiment was reawakened and manifested in violent assaults on Jewish DP camps, mostly perpetrated by German police. This wave of attacks obviously put the camp dwellers in danger. Were the Jewish Agency oriented to serve the needs of DPs, it would have placed the Jews residing in these camps at the top of the Jewish Agency's immigration list, and try to move them out as soon as possible. Yet at this point, the war effort in Palestine took priority: Selected for *'aliyáh* were only the strong, potential IDF recruits, whereas a ban was put on the weak. Women, children, and the handicapped and elderly who lacked fighting capabilities were thus kept from coming, as they were of no military use. But it was exactly these who needed protection from German raids. Concerned envoys in the camps realized the absurdity of the situation, and in a letter to Jerusalem expressed the shock at which they realized that "of all times, illegal immigration of Jews has now been limited, and its quotas in no way meet the aggravated state of Jews here [...] This limitation supposedly results only from concern for the *Yishuv*'s well-being," the envoys observed, and added defiantly:

"In our opinion, a large Jewish *'aliyáh* is no less significant than the *Haganáh*'s brave stance."[23] Their opinion, however, was not accepted; Jews with no military potential were left behind, as *'aliyáh* remained selective.

In the critical days of 1948, then, only "good human material" for the army was taken. Weak and defenseless Jews deemed unnecessary to the war effort were left behind. Two ironic juxtapositions should not be missed:

a. Many Jewish DPs who did not wish to immigrate to *Eretz Yisrael* were coerced into the army, as they were thought to be useful for the war effort; others, who wanted to immigrate but could not fight remained in Europe, even if their lives were in danger.

b. Reluctant survivors were considered traitors, deserters, degenerates and parasites; yet no organizer would ever dream of forcibly recruiting Jews in the West, nor of chiding those who did not make *'aliyáh*.

Immigration Patterns of Jewish DPs

Not all Jewish DPs in Europe immigrated to Israel. Still, only those who did go there—whether out of their own free will or by force—were put in the limelight. Israeli historians have written little about Holocaust survivors and DPs whose fate drove them elsewhere. Non-Israeli historians with an interest in Jewish DPs are few. Yet, any serious evaluation of the linkage between the Jewish holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel must put all these survivors at center stage.

In the Epilogue just below, we shall discuss the meaning of it all. But we are not there yet. We must set up a somewhat broader context first—we have to see what Jewish fates the DP story provides, who went where, and why. It is, therefore, advisable to take a moment and establish some demographic facts, for which some calculations of a kind not done so far are actually needed. Questions of interest are: Where did the

Jewish DPs in Europe finally go? What happened to them? How many of them did the Zionist emissaries manage to bring to Israel? I have conducted a thorough survey that aimed to answer these questions.

The number of Jews in the camps dwindled with time, as they began to disperse to various countries and continents on the way to new lives. Two significant events took place in 1948—the establishment of the State of Israel with its open gates, and significant changes in the immigration policy of the United States government, wrought by new laws that authorized the entry of several hundred thousand DPs. These events opened new possibilities for camp residents, and thus brought about a nearly complete resolution of the problem of World War II Displaced Persons. By 1949, only 44,000 Jewish refugees were living in Germany, and in 1950, their number further shrank, to 28,000.[24] Few were left in and around the camps, among them a group of so-called "hard core," hundreds of critically ill Jews, mostly handicapped concentration camp survivors, whom Israel was reluctant to absorb. Others, who had already settled down successfully in Germany, had no interest in leaving, and stayed.

Jewish immigration from the camps was mostly to Israel and to the large Jewish communities in the western world—the United States, Canada, Australia and South America, where the new immigrants joined existing communities. Some even became central members, at times by establishing memorials for European Jews who had been annihilated.

As the end of 1951 was approaching, all DP camps (but one) were closed down, not always without a struggle with those few that wanted to stay and receive continued welfare. Several hundred Jews remained in Fahrenwald, the last DP camp, and until 1957, refused to evacuate it.[25] The affair of World War II DPs was over.

We are nearing the end, and it is time for a final demographic summary. An important question concerns the total

number of Jews who passed through the DP camps in Germany, Austria and Italy, and their immigration patterns. In Chapter 6 we saw how the "snapshot" approach to DP demographics worked. The shifting nature of the population precludes an estimate of the total number of World War II Jewish DPs. To obtain it, the focus must shift to target countries—we have to count the Jews in DP camps in the countries to which they immigrated. While such a reconstruction is no small matter, especially in view of the fact that no one has attempted this to date, it is possible. In the calculations below, I used archival documentation and demographic data drawn from secondary sources.

For complete and precise figures of Jewish DPs, it is necessary to survey all Jewish immigrants from the occupation zones in Germany, Austria and Italy, to all countries in the years 1945-1952. Here, a serious obstacle arises: On the one hand, most of the immigration figures from these zones do not separate Jews from non-Jews;[26] on the other hand, data on Jewish immigration to various target countries do not distinguish between former DPs and others. Reliable data are available only regarding Israel and the United States: DPs immigrated to the latter thanks to a 1948 DP Bill, that was passed in Congress following intense political debate. At issue were DPs' religious and ethnic profiles, as well as their entry patterns at their destinations. This makes Jewish DPs in the United States relatively easy to track down. Immigration to Israel is also relatively easy to follow, since there is no need to distinguish between Jews and others. So even if the data are incomplete, we are able to obtain a rather close approximation, whose accuracy can be evaluated by a comparison of multiple independent sources. The figures cited herein are, to the best of my knowledge, the most definitive available, and offer a good estimate of the number of Jewish DPs who passed through the camps, as they compare most known statistical reports. Table 10-1 contains the number of Jews who resided in the Allied occupation zones in 1945-1952, and then immigrated:

Target country	*Number*	*%*
Israel[27]	140,000	42
U.S.A.[28]	120,000	36
South America[29]	20,000	6
Canada[30]	15,000	4.5
Australia[31]	10,000	3
Stayed in Germany[32]	20,000	6
Western Europe[33]	8,000	2.5
TOTAL	**333,000**	**100**

Table 10-1: Migration patterns on Jewish DPs, 1945-1951

The public debate in the United States made figures available, and these are congruent with those gleaned from the regular registration of immigrants, and from the follow-up reports of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. We know that 446,616 European immigrants arrived in the United States between 1948-1952.[34] Of these, about 120,000 were Jews (despite efforts to restrict immigration, mainly by Senator Pat McCarran).[35] In Israel, the records point to 140,000, a number which can be asserted with near certainty. As for immigration data to the other countries, the table offers rough estimates. Still, in order to avoid overestimates, the table is based on several assumptions: First, data on immigration to western countries include a large number of Jewish immigrants who originated in non-western occupation zones. The total number of Jewish immigrants, then, should be diminished by one half to two-thirds in order to reach the number of DPs among them. Second, a considerable part of the Jews in Germany in 1952 were not from DP camps but returned to Germany, having left earlier.

Zionist history books take pride in the high rate of DP immigration to Israel. The number commonly cited is around 70 percent. To assess the accuracy of this proportion, Table 10-1 intentionally underestimates the total number of Jewish DPs, and overestimates immigration to Israel. The method used was as follows: In every case of discrepancy among sources, or a

demographic assumption that might have changed the numbers, the lowest figure was chosen, except for numbers involving immigrants to Israel, in which case the highest estimate was taken, and circumstances likely to reduce numbers were not taken into consideration. The number of Jewish DPs is thus higher than the estimate given below: Estimates of immigrants to various countries who did not come from DP camps are likely too high. By contrast, the actual number of immigrants to Israel is probably lower than what the table specifies, since the out-migration (that in the early years of the state is known to have exceeded 10 percent) is not subtracted from the total number of immigrants. Of the former, a high percentage seems to have originated in the DP camps.

Despite the generous estimates of Israel immigrants, and the rather reductive estimate of the total number of Jews, two surprising facts emerge from this table: First, the number of Jewish DPs who came through the camps is significantly higher than previously supposed. Second, the majority of Jewish DPs did not go to Israel, neither during the British Mandate, nor after the establishment of the state. Only about 40 percent of the DPs naturalized in Israel, even though at any given time, it was an easier immigration country than any other.[36] The aftermath of the Holocaust, then, was not necessarily Zionist. Jews (and notably, DP leaders Rabbi Nathan Baruch, Shmuel Gringaus, Yosef Rosensaft, and David Treger, all of whom went to the United States) migrated to all corners of the world, landed in Jewish centers worldwide, where they built memorials to their loved ones, and gave Jewish life new directions. A dozen years or so after the events of the Holocaust had uprooted them, the Jewish refugees of World War II found themselves homes.

Epilogue: Zionists versus Jews

Millions of Jews, annihilated as they had no land of their own, watch us from the ashes of history, and command us to settle and establish a state for our people.

> Moshé Dayan on the fresh grave of Ro'i Rothberg, a farmer in a frontier *kibbutz* who was killed by infiltrators from Egypt. April 1956.[1]

If they are right—those who claim that a Jew must not live abroad—I shall know no peace of mind, as all of them have not come to live in *Eretz Yisrael*.

> Chayim Ozer Grodzinsky, the last Vilnius Rabbi, in a letter to Rabbi Ya'acov Reines, founder of *Mizrahi*, after the latter declared that every Jew has an obligation to live in *Eretz Yisrael*, 1906.[2]

A Very Brief Summary

We embarked on a journey to the DP camps in quest for clues regarding the relationship between ethnicity and national territory—between Jewish identity and Zionism as manifested through the State of Israel—a Jewish state in Western Palestine. Before proceeding to general issues, it is important to briefly summarize the main themes of the Jewish DP story that this book brings up:

a. The vast majority of the population of the Jewish DP camps (more than 90 percent) strongly supported the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

b. At the same time, the majority of the very same population (more than 60 percent) did not immigrate to Palestine/Israel and chose other destinations, despite the fact that at any given

point in time during the relevant years (1945-1951), Palestine/Israel was the least difficult target location to which to obtain passage.

c. The Jewish DP population in Germany, Austria and Italy, whose size is conservatively estimated to be 333,000, held great demographic promise to Zionist planners. By comparison, as Independence was declared in May 1948, the entire Jewish population of Palestine was slightly over 600,000; between 1948-1951, Israel received an additional 700,000 Jewish immigrants (while concomitantly blocking the return of approximately the same number of Palestinian refugees who fled or were expelled between 1947-1949).[3]

d. Zionist conduct in situations where there was a conflict between their interests and the DPs' indicate that Zionist leaders, planners and organizers put the interests of their movement before the well-being of the Jewish refugees whom they were trying to help. Three findings lead to this conclusion: (1) The children's affair (1945), in which a few thousand children who could arrive to safety in England and France were forced to stay in the camps; (2) The compulsory IDF draft affair (1948); (3) The way the Zionists perceived the DPs' obligation to their movement, as revealed by the internal Zionist discourse.

e. Upon being called to fulfill "their duty" and join the IDF draft, most Jewish DPs were reluctant. A failed voluntary draft drive (to which less than 0.3 percent of the DP population volunteered) led to compulsory conscription. A significant number of DPs was drafted forcibly (increasing the IDF manpower gain 11-fold). The result was a significant contribution of 7,800 new Foreign Draftees to an army whose personnel totaled 100,000 men and women. It appears, then, that about 100 of these ex-DP conscripts died in the war.

What do these findings mean? Could the DP affair be used as a key to an understanding of Zionist conceptions of national identity, territory, and sovereignty? In the pages that follow, I will try to look for answers.

The DP Story, the Zionists, and World Jews

States, even the most democratic ones, use coercive practices against their citizenry. They make you pay taxes, fulfill your civic duties, and when circumstances so require, your state can even impose compulsory conscription on you. This coercion is legitimized, as it is normally construed, as an act in which the state acts as the agent of popular will, and harnesses the individual for the common good. Thus a forced draft as such is rarely illegitimate, because citizenship is universally interpreted as a status to which both rights and obligations are attached. While the Jewish DPs were conscripted to the IDF, their case is an entirely different matter. On grounds of general civic duties it is difficult to find justification to the conscription of non-citizens, who live outside the territory of the coercive government, who had never set foot there, do not speak the local language, and for the most part have no interest in going there. That is, the characteristics that are typically diagnostic of citizenship—geographical location, language, past personal history and intentions for the future—are not found in the DP population. Likewise, it is difficult to see what legitimized the Zionists' action earlier, when in 1945 they banned the transfer of Jewish children to England and France.

If we would like to see the gravity of the problem, and also try to connect it to our present day existence, it is important to understand what in the eyes of the Zionists legitimized the conscription of Jews in Europe to the Israeli army. Such an understanding might give us an unusual glimpse into the conception of Jewish nationalism of *Yishuv* leaders, and thus provide hints on the way Zionists in Israel view their connection to world Jewry today.

From an archival perspective, it appears that these matters hardly concerned leaders. The legitimacy of the Foreign Draft was not discussed. Rather, leaders made general statements

about the affinity between *She'erith ha-pleyta* and the Zionist project in Palestine, although it was clear that this affinity is one-sided: Jews must support the Zionist enterprise.

The activists who were closer to the action—especially those who were advocating the use of force against dodgers—could not avoid a personal confrontation with the problem of legitimacy. Aware of the coercive nature of their actions, they needed a world view that would enable them to live with their violent acts. Nahum Shadmi, originator of the European draft idea, was the first to understand the problematic connection between the survivors and the Zionist movement. He realized that the survivors did not constitute a monolithic Zionist group, and that if *Haganáh* wanted draftees, then a forced draft would have to be imposed on the DPs. He thus tried to rationalize the forced draft in an attempt to legitimize the coercive measures he and his men were about to take. "We oblige Jews in the camps to be drafted," he wrote, "as if they were citizens of Israel, and not of Germany [...] Once Israel makes military service compulsory for Jews of certain age groups—this duty should fall upon *She'erit ha-pleyta* as well."[4]

Not all envoys needed this stipulation. Most of them took the equation Jew=Zionist for granted, and felt betrayed by those Jews who did not "rush to help when their home was on fire," and wanted instead to make a home elsewhere (mostly in the United States). "We demanded of the Jews to recognize their own state," wrote one of them proudly to Jerusalem.[5] Others were even more expressive: "These Jews are so corrupt that they show absolutely no interest in the nation's struggle,"[6] wrote an envoy in Austria with disdain. Palestine envoys in Germany, then, viewed Jewish identity as necessarily Zionist. To many of them, failure to conform with this equation was socially deviant, and justified violent acts.

But where did this equation come from? The place of Zionism in Jewish history at the time was not as well-established as to justify the envoys' conception that equated Jewish

identity with it. This view of Zionism and Jewish identity could hardly have emerged by itself in the minds of so many. It must have been invented by someone with access to a system that educated these envoys. It is here that the role of historians as nation builders becomes apparent. The development of a Zionist outlook on Jewish history concerned historical scholars in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem since the 1930s. With access to the hearts and minds of many, and with willingness to participate in the act of nation building, this group of historians seems to have played a critical role in shaping the consciousness of activists. Indeed, an examination of their writings immediately points to the origins of the equation Jew=Zionist. Consider the manifesto by professors Yitzhak (Fritz) Baer, Ben Zion Dinburg (later Dinur, Israel's first Minister of Education) and Haim-Hillel Ben-Sasson in the first issue of the academic journal *Zion*, published in Palestine in 1936. In it they lay new foundations for the study of Jewish history. "Jewish history itself," they asserted, "is the story of the Israeli nation [sic], which has never expired, nor has its significance waned at any point in time. Jewish history is unified as a homogenous entity that encompasses all times and places, all instructive of one another."[7] A similar view is espoused in a text that Dinur (now Education Minister) later wrote for an eighth grade reader, where the notion of continuity and uniformity of Jewish history is applied to a particular event:

> The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising was not one of its kind: Its flames illuminate for us hundreds of rebellions, numerous struggles nearly everywhere [...] Five years after the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Israel declared its independence. We withstood a bitter struggle. We triumphed, we overcame. The war of independence is seen as a continuation of the Jews' armed struggle in World War II, since the epic of Israel's bravery is one and the same.[8]

This view—expanded, repeated, and developed, taught in

schools and preparatory courses for envoys (Chapter 3), and rehashed by leaders—is what made activists feel legitimized in performing violent acts on their brethren. This is the essence of the so-called Palestinocentric view of modern Jewish history—the idea, so eloquently expressed by Dinur in the paragraph above, that Zionist history is the necessary, hence sole, continuation of Jewish history. On this view, the *Sho'ah* is directly linked to *T'kumah* (the resurgence of the State of Israel). For the Palestine envoys in Germany, this meant that a survivor, a stateless Jew becomes *ipso facto* a citizen of the Jewish state, hence subject to the same rights and obligations as other Israeli nationals, precisely as Shadmi had written. The irony in this construal of Jewish history is hard to miss: The very movement that was created to bring deliverance to the Jews now took possession of Jewish national identity, and in its name expropriated the rights of the people, so that its own needs could be served. This is why the DP draft has been so embarrassing to those who seek to defend the Zionist line.

Israeli historians thus decided to be active participants in the nation-building endeavor, rather than commit to the standards and norms of their profession. This is not atypical: Controversial parts of national history receive a similar treatment in many countries. The consequence, at any rate, was that the DP affair I told here was expunged from the books, remaining unknown for long decades. Repeated allegations (mostly by Bund members) regarding violence in the DP camps in the context of the draft were denied by Zionist historians. Historian Yehuda Bauer, to take one prominent example, who by all accounts is a leading student of the period, dismissed these accounts. There may have been some violent incidents in the camps, he argued, but these were scattered initiatives of crazed individuals, and not a matter of policy. At issue were a few isolated cases in which "overzealous recruiters switched from convincing to forced convincing to force." The authorities, he wrote, tried to act against them, but to no avail, and "even the

Z.K. was helpless."[9] As we have seen, such dismissals are not based on a careful examination of the factual record. No thorough study of the DP affair was available, despite the fact that the archives which were used for this book have been accessible to the public since the 1950s.

Having grown up in Israel during the 1950s-60s, the factual record as it unfolds in this book was unknown to me, and its discovery came as a complete surprise. The DP story was mentioned in school (as well as in books and movies) in the context of the continuity and uniformity of Jewish destiny, in keeping with the Baer/Dinur/Ben-Sasson line. We were told that virtually all the survivor DPs immigrated to Palestine/Israel, after a courageous struggle against the British. Those who joined the army, we were told, were registered for the draft upon their arrival in Palestine; we were also told that refugees and survivors arrived in Palestine eagerly, ready to join the forming Israeli society and assist in the war effort. But the real story was kept from us. The truth, as we saw it here, is that many pale, Yiddish-speaking Holocaust survivors had been forcefully drafted abroad in 1948, and were then dropped against their will into the grim reality of the battlefields of Palestine.

Over the years, the Zionists have made many demands on world Jewry. The sad story told in these pages is extreme, perhaps, but not atypical. May its lesson stand as a sobering note to all.

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NOTES

A note on the annotation of archival sources:
The DP collections at the YIVO archive in New York (currently housed at the Center for Jewish History) are microfilmed, and copies are available elsewhere. There is some inter-archive variation in the numbering systems of record groups for the DP collections. My research on these archival materials was mostly done on a copy available in Tel Aviv (at the time, located in the now defunct *Ha'apaláh* Project Archive, see list of archival sources above). I therefore used the Tel Aviv notation. Below is a list of corresponding variants:

Tel Aviv (used in this book)	YIVO
DPG group 51	RG 294.2 Germany
DPA group 51c	RG 294.4 Austria
LS	RG 294.1 Leo Schwartz

I am grateful to Leo Greenbaum of YIVO for his help in this important matter.

Prologue

1 Baer, Y. *Galut*, (1937, English tr. 1947). New York: Schocken.

2 Baron, Salo. *Memadeha ha-'olamiyim shel ha-historya ha-yehudit* (The global dimensions of Jewish history). *Ha-Do'ar*, 42, 382-84, 416-18, 1962. Reprinted in R. Liberles & Y.-T. Assis, eds., *Memadeha ha-'olamiyim shel ha-historya ha-yehudit* (The Global Dimensions of Jewish History). Jerusalem: Z. Shazar Center, 1996.

3 Beyt-Tzvi. Shabtai B. *Ha-Tzionut ha-post-Ugandit be-Mashber ha-Sho'ah.* Tel Aviv, 1977. [English translation as *Post-Ugandan Zionism on Trial* (*Beyt-Tzvi* henceforth). Tel Aviv, 1988]; Grodzinsky, Y. *Ha-sho'ah, ha-yishuv, manhigav ve-ha-historionim shelahem.* (The Holocaust, the *Yishuv*, its leaders and their historians). *Ha'aretz* 8.4.1994 (Part A), 15.4.1994 (Part B).

4 There is a rich literature of such accusations. One side is ultra-orthodox writings (e.g., Weissmandel, M.D. *Min ha-Metzar* (From Dire Straights) New York, 1960; Veselman, M. '*Ot Kayin* (The Mark of Caine). Bnei-Brak, undated; Shonfeld, Rabbi M. *The Holocaust Victims Accuse: Documents*

and testimony of Jewish war crimes (Hebrew version: *Srufey ha-Kivshanim Ma'ashimim*). New York: Bnei Yeshivos, 1977; also, there are critical left-wing writings (e.g., Brenner, Lenni. *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators*. Kent: Beckenham, 1983). Both the Shonfeld and the Brenner books are available on-line at http://www.jewsagainstzionism.com/onlinebooks. Finally, there is a right-wing Revisionist literature that makes similar accusations, most notably Hecht, Ben. *Perfidy* (1959, republished by Milah Press, 1997).

5 Bauer, Y. *Jews for Sale?* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994; Rubinstein, W.D. *The Myth of Rescue*. London: Routledge, 1999.

6 However, see *Beyt-Tzvi*. For recent discussions of rescue during the Holocaust, see Cohen, Raya. *Beyn 'kan' le-'sham'* (Between 'here' and 'there': The story of 5 witnesses to the Holocaust 1939-1942). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1999; see also Grodzinsky, Yosef. *Efsharuyot hatzalah she-lo hit-mamshu* (Unrealized rescue options), *Ha'aretz*, 31.3.2000.

7 Ben-Gurion in a Mapai Council, January 1944. Quoted by Yehi'am Weitz, *Muda'ut ve-Choser 'Onim* (Awareness and Helplessness). Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1994, p. 83.

8 Yehuda Bauer's *B'richáh—Flight and Rescue*. New York: Random House, 1970 (henceforth *B'richáh*) claims that over 70% of the DP population immigrated to Palestine/Israel. This figure is widely cited. As we will see from a demographic study I conducted (Table 10-1, Chapter 10), this figure is not grounded in documentary evidence.

9 See Cohen, Yinon. Immigration and the Changing Composition of Israel's Population in the Past Half Century. In Daniel Levy and Yfaat Weiss, eds., *Challenging Ethnic Citizenship: German and Israeli Perspectives on Immigration*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2002 (henceforth *Cohen*).

10 Dubnov, B. Salzburg, 6.2.48. IDF 664/580/56, p. 426.

11 Grodzinsky, Y. Le-hilachem ba-tzionizatzya shel ha-sho'ah (Opposing the Zionization of the Holocaust) by way of eulogizing S.B. Beyt Tzvi. *Ha'aretz*, 15.7.1994.

Chapter One

1 Duras, Marguerite. *Hiroshima mon amour* [text of film by Alain Resnais, translated from the French by Richard Seaver]. New York: Grove Press.

2 See, for example, reports by Major Heymont, battalion commander of US army infantry, who suddenly found himself in the role of military governor at the end of the war: Heymont, Irving. *Among the Survivors of the Holocaust—1945*, The Landsberg DP camp letters of Major Irving Heymont, US Army. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1982 (henceforth *Heymont*); on the organization of the US army as Military

Government, see Zink, Harold. *American Military Government in Germany.* New York: Macmillan, 1947 (henceforth *Zink*).

3 Clay, Lucius D. *Decision in Germany*, New York: Doubleday, 1950, p. 15 (henceforth *Clay*).

4 See Trevor-Roper, H. *The Last Days of Hitler*, 1947, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, Chapter 4, p. 154ff.

5 See *Clay*, Chapter 1.

6 See Eisenberg, Carolyn. *Drawing the Line: The American Decision to Divide Germany 1944-1949.* New York: Cambridge University Press, p. 78 (henceforth *Eisenberg*).

7 See Pulzer, Peter. *German Politics 1945-1995.* Oxford University Press, 1995, chapter 2. (henceforth *Pulzer*).

8 See, for example, Kochavi, Aryeh I. *Akurim u-Vepolitika Beyin-Le'umit* (DPs and international politics), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1992 (henceforth *Kochavi*), for a description of the political situation in Britain.

9 *Pulzer*, pp. 24-27.

10 The Potsdam Declaration—Tripartite Agreement by the United States, the United Kingdom and Soviet Russia concerning Conquered Countries, August 2, 1945. Pamphlet No. 4, *Pillars Of Peace.* Documents Pertaining To American Interest In Establishing A Lasting World Peace: January 1941-February 1946, Published by the Book Department, Army Information School, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., May 1946 (available on the World Wide Web).

11 See *Clay*, Chapter 2; for a description of the conflict, see *Eisenberg*, pp. 89-120.

12 Levin, Yitzchak. *Noch'n churb'aan* (After the Holocaust), New York, 1950, p. 14. (henceforth *Levin*).

13 *Clay*, p. 21.

14 Malcolm J. Proudfoot, *European Refugees 1939-1952: A Study in Forced Population Movement.* London: 1957, p. 22. (henceforth *Proudfoot*).

15 See Dinnerstein, L. *America and the Survivors of the Holocaust.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, appendix A, p. 273 (henceforth *Dinnerstein*) for this high estimate.

16 *Dinnerstein* himself presents a statistical survey of various sources, in which he cites—based on figures taken from *Life Magazine*—9.5 million DPs in September 1945 (5-6 million of whom had already returned home). The most comprehensive statistical survey available is *Proudfoot*, according to whom there were some 11 million refugees in Europe at Liberation, of whom 6.75 million were in Germany. Another study that cites actual figures is that of W. Jakobmeyer: *Vom Zwangsarbeiter zum Haimatlosen Ausländer.* Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985 (henceforth *Jakobmeyer*).

According to Jakobmeyer, writing on the basis of reports of the Allied Supreme Command in Germany, there were fewer refugees, numbering from 2 to 6.3 million refugees in Germany (including those who returned home) between May and August 1945 (*Jakobmeyer*, p. 41). A later study, Königseder, A. & Wetzel, J. *Lebensmut im Wartesaal*, Frankfurt A.M., 1994 (henceforth *Königseder and Wetzel*), cites 4.2 million refugees in July 1945, based upon the report of G. Schwartz found in the History Institute of Munich (p. 18). It is, of course, difficult to arrive at conclusive figures. For a comparative discussion of the different figures and the an attempt to reconcile these differences, see also Zemerion, Zemach. *Pirkei Sho'ah u-She'erit* (Chapters in Shoah and Remnantors), Tel Aviv, 1975, pp. 43-49.

17 *Dinnerstein* (p. 274), quoting the military governor's monthly report (April 1946) on repatriation of DPs in the American zone. These figures do not include German citizens who became refugees, or expelled ethnic Germans. Jakobmeyer cites different figures, from earlier reports, according to which by mid-August, 4,323,000 refugees returned to their homes, and 2,039,000 remained in Germany. Proudfoot (pp. 238-239) cites 1,888,401 DPs in Germany at the end of September 1945 (not including Germans and ethnic Germans).

18 *Dinnerstein*, table A11, p. 286.

19 See Holborn, Louise. *The International Refugee Organization*, London: Oxford University Press, 1956, pp. 175-187 (henceforth *Holborn*); *Proudfoot*, chapter 4.

20 *Jakobmeyer* (p. 43) quotes reports of SHAEF G-5 of [14.5.45], and has difficulty arriving at an accurate numerical estimate because of census inaccuracies and high mortality rates. Of the 60,000 survivors of Bergen-Belsen, some 7,500 died between April 23rd and May 10th, 1945 (9,000 according to *Königseder and Wetzel*); At Dachau, 31,561 were liberated, at Mauthausen 72,000-80,000, at Flossenburg 1,600, at Buchenwald and Bauherrdorf 16,000. The death toll during the first weeks reached about 20 percent. Since most of those liberated were Jews, this estimate may be compared to the estimated numbers of Jews at that time: the Harrison report (see below) estimated the number of Jews at assembly centers in July 1945 roughly as 50,000 to 100,000. *Proudfoot* (p. 239) mentions 69,098 Jews in Germany on [30.9.45]; *Dinnerstein* (p. 276) believes that the *Proudfoot* estimates are too low, as they are being based upon British statistics in which Jews and non-Jews were not listed separately.

21 Sce *Dinnerstein*, Statistical Appendix, for a discussion of the degree of accuracy in the estimates.

22 *Proudfoot*, p. 21.

23 *Proudfoot*, p. 121.

24 See *Zink*, chapter 4, pp. 41-52.

25 See Warhaftig, Zorah. *Uprooted*. Institute for Jewish Affairs. New York: American Jewish Congress, 1946, pp. 18-19; see also *Holborn*, appendix 1 (IRO constitution), pp. 584-587. (henceforth *Warhaftig-Uprooted*).

26 There were additional categories of refugee that do not pertain to the present discussion, applying to refugees of events that precede World War II: a. Spanish Republicans and other victims of the Phalangist regime in Spain. b. People defined as 'refugees' prior to World War II for reasons of racial, religious, national or political discrimination.

27 *Holborn*, p. 48.

28 Homecoming, the acquisition of a new nationality, refusal to receive care, or unwillingness to work would terminate the processing of a refugee by the IRO. The IRO constitution also defines those ineligible to aid: war criminals and their helpers, criminal offenders, ethnic Germans who were relocated to Germany or escaped from Allied forces. This category also included people receiving aid from their own government, those who had acted subversively against one of the Allies and others.

29 Except for Camp Fahrenwald, where several hundred DPs remained, refusing to leave until 1957. See, *Königseder and Wetzel*, pp. 99-172; also, Welner A. 'Fahrenwald, the last Jewish DP camp in Germany, 1951-1957', Unpublished M.A. thesis, Bar-Ilan University, 1978.

Chapter Two

1 Manger, Itzik. *Lid un balade.*. Tel Aviv: Y.L. Peretz Farlag, 1976.

2 *Proudfoot*, table 32, pp. 322-323.

3 Gutman, Israel. 'She'erit ha-pleyta—be'ayot ve-havharot' (Surviving Remnant—problems and insights), in: *She'erit ha-pleyta 1944-1948* (Surviving Remnant, 1944-1948), Israel Gutman and Adina Drechsler (editors), Jerusalem: Yad va-Shem, 1981, p. 462.

4 See Levin, Dov. 'Sridei ha-yehudim ba-'aratzot ha-baltiyot beyin htbasesut li-'ytsira (Remaining Jews in the Baltic states between settlement and creation) in: *She'erit ha-pleyta 1944-1948*, Israel Gutman and Adina Drexler Drechsler.

5 See for example Krakowski, Shmu'el. 'Machanot ha-nazim be-'aviv 1945—pinuy, tzas'a'adot ha-mavet ha-'acharonot, shichrur' (Nazi camps in Spring 1945—evacuation, last death marches, Liberation), *Dapim le-Cheker Tekufat ha-Sho'ah*, *Dalet* (Notes for Holocaust study, 4), 1986, pp. 179-192.

6 See Gutman, Israel. *Ha-yehudim be-Polin le-'Achar Milchemet ha-'Olam ha-Shniya* (The Jews in Poland after World War II), Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1975; *B'richáh* estimates the number of Jews in Poland at

about 80,000, based on various reports, some of them anonymous, of Jewish organizations in Poland. I have preferred to follow Gutman's approach, mainly since his is a more recent publication.

7 On the organization see Grajek, Stefan (Shalom). *Ha-Ma'avak al Hemshech ha-Chayim'* (The Struggle for the continuation of life), Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1989; more on the *B'richáh* organization, see Dekel, Efrayim. *Bi-ntivei ha-B'richáh* (On the Path of Flight), Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1958.

8 See Eliash Y. & Gurewitch B. *The Liberators: Eyewitness Accounts of the Liberation of Concentration Camps*. New York, 1981.

9 *Proudfoot* (p. 303) argues that each of the large camps mentioned in the text had between 10 and 100 auxiliary camps. Mauthausen had 45 auxiliary camps.

10 Rosensaft, Y. 'Our Belsen', in *Belsen*, Irgun She'erit ha-pleyta me-ha-'ezor ha-briti, (Organization of Surviving Remnant in the British Zone). Tel Aviv, 1957, p. 25 (henceforth *Rosensaft*).

11 See the description of W.R.F. Collis, 'A medical appraisal of the horrors'. This article was first published in the *British Medical Journal*, June 9th, 1945.

12 See *Königseder and Wetzel*, p. 175; the state of the camp upon liberation is described in D. Sington, 'April 15, 1945' in *Belsen*, op. cit , pp. 67-80. Captain Sington was in the first British army unit that entered Bergen-Belsen with tanks and liberated it.

13 On Bernadotte's rescue operations, see *Proudfoot*, pp. 308-309; *Rosensaft*, p. 29.

14 *Kochavi*, p. 15.

15 See *Königseder and Wetzel*, p. 175, *Jakobmeyer*, pp. 42-46, see also Keidar, Ayala. 'Bergen-Belsen—hanhala 'u-manhigut be-machane ëakurim' (Bergen-Belsen—administration and leadership in a DP camp), M.A, thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1990 (henceforth *Keidar*), p. 4. German and Israeli authors refer to similar documents—HIAS reports. *Jakobmeyer* refers to reports of the DP bureau of the US Army.

16 *Proudfoot*, p. 311.

17 *Jakobmeyer, op. cit.*

18 *Heymont*, p. 5.

19 See table in *Proudfoot*, pp. 238-239, for detailed figures on refugees on 30.9.1945.

20 See Wasserstein, Bernard. *Vanishing Diaspora*. Cambridge, Massachusetts.: Harvard University Press, 1996.

21 *Proudfoot*, p. 330.

22 *Zink*, chapter 2.

23 *Dinnerstein*, p. 33.

24 See *Heymont*, p. 8.

25 *Dinnerstein*, p. 13.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-17.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

28 See Gelber, Yoav, 'Ha-mitnadvim ha-'eretz-yisre'elim u-she'erit ha-pleyta' (Palestine volunteers and the Surviving Remnant), in: *She'erit ha-pleyta 1944-1948* (The Surviving Remnant 1944-1948), Israel Gutman and Adina Drechsler (editors), Jerusalem: Yad va-Shem, 1981. Gelber also cites reports on similar attitudes in Camp Buchenwald from reports found in YIVO's DPG archives.

29 For a discussion of the validity of this survey, see conference on the encounter of Palestine-born Jews in the British army and Holocaust survivors, published in Dinnur, Daniela, ed., *ha-Mifgash* (The Encounter). Tel Aviv: Daniela Dinnur Publications, 1993.

30 See *Königseder and Wetzel*, p. 19.

31 'To He-Chalutz World Committee, from He-Chalutz youth committee at Buchenwald' (Yochanan Goldenkrantz, Aharon, Tuvia Kaminsky). Received on 23.9.1945, from *Tz'ror yedi'ot no.* 24 (Notices), Secretariat of *ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad* movement, 12.10.45. AA, files of the Acting Committee, IV-208-1-E3891.

32 Mankowitz, Ze'ev. *Idiologya u-politika bi-she'erit ha-pleyta be-eyzor ha-kibbush ha-amerika'I be-germanya 1945-1946* (Ideology and politics in She'erit ha-pleyta in the American Zone of Germany 1945-1946). Doctoral dissertation, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1987, p. 29.

33 *Rosensaft*, p. 27. Rosensaft's critics argue that he forced his way to the position of head of the committee, and that no more than 200 people attended this meeting. Be that as it may, Rosensaft headed the committee until the camp was closed down in 1950.

34 Dr. Grinberg to the World Jewish Congress, 31.5.1945. YIVO Leo Schwartz archive MK488, file 129 (roll 14, frame 717).

35 Dr. Grinberg to Nourishment Board, DPG 483, file 17 (roll 2, frame 340).

36 *Ibid.*, frame 342.

37 See Bauer, Y. *Out of the Ashes*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1989, (henceforth *Ashes*) pp. 42-44; see also *Gelber*, p. 65.

38 Khoter-Yishai, Aharon. 'Doch ha-mishlachat le-Ostria u-le-Germanya' (Report of the Mission to Austria and Germany) in Ya'acov Margalit, ed., *Hineni, Shlacheni* (Here I am, Send me). Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz ha-me'uchad publishers, 1985, (henceforth *Hineni, Shlacheni*), pp. 208-214.

39 Margalit, Yaacov 'Ha-brigada higi'ah!' (The Brigade is here!), *Hineni, Shlacheni*, p. 215.

40 Slutzki, Yehuda. *Sefer Toldot ha-Haganáh* (History of the *Haganáh*), vol. 3, 'Mi-ma'avak le-milchama' (From Struggle to War), part 2, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1973 (henceforth *Haganáh*), pp. 1007-1008, 1020-1024.

41 Keinan, Irit. *Lo Nirga ha-Ra'av* (The Hunger did not Subside). Tel Aviv: Am Oved (Sifriyat ha-Ha'apalah), 1996 (henceforth *Keinan*), chapter 4. See also Segev, Tom. *The Seventh Million*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993, chapter 3.

42 Ben Gurion at the Mapai party convention, January 1944. Quoted in *Weitz*, p. 84.

43 Moshé Sharett at the Mapai's Central Committee meeting, 24.8.1943. Ibid. p. 100.

44 Lavon, Pinchas at the 'Gordonia' movement council. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

45 Protocol of the meeting of *Mapai* party secretariat, 15.12.1943. In *Gelber*, p. 57.

46 *Gelber*, chapters 8-10.

47 See *Keinan*, chapter 4.

48 *Hagana*, vol. 3, part 2, p. 998.

49 An interview with Ms. Fanny Tirosh (Yossi Peled's and Sarah Gutman's sister), an addendum to *ha-Mifgash* (The Encounter), Tel-Aviv: Daniela Dinnur, pp. 115-116, 1993. An appendix contains attestations by Peled and his sisters, and of the daughter of the adopting Belgian who had saved them.

50 Meged, Aharon. *Massa ha-Yeladim el ha-'Aretz ha-Muvtachat: Parashath Yaldey Selvino* (The Children's Journey to the Promised Land: The Selvino Children Affair). Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1985, (henceforth: *The Selvino children*).

51 *The Selvino Children*, pp. 2-19, 55.

52 Objections on the part of Yosef Rosensaft of the British Zone prevented the establishment of a general committee. See Hyman, A. *The Undefeated*. Jerusalem: Gefen Publishers, 1994. (henceforth *Hyman*), pp. 74-83. For a vivid description of the establishment of the committee, see Schwartz, Leo W. *The Redeemers*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1953, (henceforth *Schwartz*) pp. 3-9.

53 AA, group VII-126, file 7a.

54 For the story of 'kibbutz Buchenwald', see Tidor Baumel, Yehudit. *Kibbuz Buchenwald*, Lochamey ha-geta'ot: ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad, 1994.

55 *Proudfoot* (pp. 238-239) notes 69,098 Jewish DPs in Europe on 30.9.1945, of whom about 9,500 in Austria, about 22,000 in Germany, and some 21,000 in Italy. These figures are probably too low, as *Dinnerstein* claims

(p. 276). In the latter's opinion, this is due to *Proudfoot's* reliance on British data, in which Jews are not counted separately from other nationals.

56 *Proudfoot*, p. 342, note 4.

Chapter Three

1 Quoted in Shadmi. Nachum. *Kav Yashar be-Ma'agaley ha-Chayim* (A Straight Line in the Circles of Life), Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1995, p. 163 (henceforth *Shadmi*).

2 See *B'richáh*, Chapter 3; Ganin, Zvi. *Truman, American Jewry and Israel*, 1945-1948. New York: Holmes & Meyer, 1979, Chapter 2 (henceforth *Ganin*); *Dinnerstein*, pp. 34-35; Wischnitzer, Mark. *To Dwell in Safety*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1948, pp. 260-3 (henceforth *Wischnitzer*).

3 Quoted in *Dinnerstein*, p. 293ff.

4 For the full text of the report, see *Dinnerstein*, Appendix B, pp. 291-305; see also Chapter 2. For a web version of the report, see http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/dp/resourc1.htm

5 See Genizi, Chayim. *Yo'etz u-Mekim: Ha-yo'etz la-tzava ha-amerikani u-le-She'erit ha-Pleyta* (Advisor and Founder: The US Army Advisor and to the Surviving Remnant). Tel Aviv: Moreshet, Sifriyat Poalim, 1987, (henceforth *Genizi*).

6 See *Ganin*, Chapter 1.

7 *Dinnerstein*, op. cit. p. 294.

8 *Ganin*, p. 39.

9 *Ibid.* p. 30; *B'richáh*, Chapter 3.

10 Templar, Deputy Military Governor, to Henderson, Refugee Bureau of the State Department, quoted in *Keidar*, p. 17.

11 See *Dinnerstein*, Chapter 3; *Kochavi*, Chapter 3.

12 Weizmann, Chaim. *Masa u-Ma'as* (Essay and Deed). Tel Aviv: Shocken, 1951, p. 428. (henceforth *Masa u-Ma'as*).

13 *Ganin*, p. 39.

14 See, for example, Porat,Yehoshua, *mi-Mehumot li-Mrida: Ha-tnu'a ha-le'umit ha-'aravit ha-Falastinit 1929-1939* (From Riots to Revolt: The Arab-Palestinian National Movement 1929-1939). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1978, Chapter 10.

15 See Laquer, Walter. *The Arab-Israeli Reader*, New York: Bantam Books, 1969, p. 64, document no. 17 (henceforth *Laquer*).

16 See HaCohen, Deborah. *Tochnit ha-Million* (The Million Plan). Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishers, 1994 (henceforth *HaCohen*), pp. 229-30; *Ganin*, p. 35.

17 This, at least, is how Yehuda Bauer sees it, see *B'richáh*, p. 83.

18 Sharett, Moshé. *be-Sha'ar ha-'Umot* (At the Gate of Nations). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1958, (henceforth *be-Sha'ar ha-'Umot*), p. 14.

19 *Dinnerstein*, p. 35.

20 *Kochavi*, Part one, Chapter 2.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76; *Dinnerstein*, Chapter 3.1.

22 Ben-Gurion's remarks above are all quoted from the minutes of the Jewish Agency Directorate meeting, 21.11.1945, CZA S200/48b, pp. 11386-96.

23 *Proudfoot*, pp. 238-239.

24 Yehuda Nadich, the first Advisor on Jewish Affairs to the US Army Commander, reports that upon his arrival in Germany at the end of August, he was told that the Jews numbered 92,000-97,000 and were mostly of Polish origin. Nadich, Yehuda. *Eisenhower and the Jews*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1953, (henceforth *Nadich*), p. 30.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57ff.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

27 See for example *Schwartz*, pp. 17-25.

28 *Heymont*, p. 24.

29 For a list of camps and detailed resident counts, see *Königseder and Wetzel*, pp. 247-268.

30 *Heymont*, p. 21.

31 Cited in Hirschmann, Ira. *The Embers Still Burn*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1949, (henceforth *Hirschmann*), p. xii.

32 *Zink*, pp. 40-78.

33 *Dinnerstein*, pp. 11-14.

34 *Hyman*, p. 44.

35 For an official JDC history, see: Bauer, Yehuda, *My Brother's Keeper*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1974; see also *Ashes*.

36 See *Bauer*, p. 41.

37 Bentwich, Norman. *They Found Refuge*. London: The Cresset Press, 1956, (henceforth *Bentwich*), pp. 138-142.

38 *Nadich*, p. 31.

39 See *B'richah*, p. xviii.

40 Minutes of Jewish Agency Directorate meeting, 14.1.1945, CZA S100/46b, sic.

41 Livne, Anat. 'The involvement of the Joint in the escape and illegal immigration activities in Europe 1945-1948', MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1989, (henceforth *Livne*), p. 7.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 9

43 *Heymont*, p. 26.

44 The Zionist Center in Bavaria to the Central Committee of Liberated Jews in Bavaria, 30.7.1945. DPG MK483, file 16 (roll 2, frame 28).

45 See *Levin*, pp. 15-41; Warhaftig, Zorah, *Sarid u-Falit bi-Ymey ha-Sho'ah* (Survivor and Refugee during the Holocaust). Jerusalem: Yad va-Shem, 1984 (henceforth *Warhaftig*), part 3, chapter 2.

46 *Schwartz*, pp. 45-55.

47 *Heymont*, p. 65.

48 *Schwartz*, p. 46.

49 Minutes of the Jewish Agency Directorate meeting, 21.11.1945, CZA S100/48b.

50 Shapiro, Anita. Ha-mifgash beyn ha-yishuv u-she'erit ha-pleyta (The encounter between *yishuv* and She'erit ha-pleyta). In Gutman and Drechsler, eds., (henceforth *Shapiro*), pp. 71-92.

51 See *Hyman*, p. 138; see also Yahil, (Hoffmann) Chayim '*Pe'ulot ha'mish-lachat ha-eretzyisraelit li-she'erit ha-pleyta, 1945-1949*' (The activities of the Palestine Mission to *She'erit ha-pleyta*, 1945-1949), parts A,B. *Yalkut Moreshet*, Vols. *Lamed* (30), *Lamed Alef* (31), 1980, (henceforth *Hoffmann*), p. 23.

52 *Mankowitz*, p. 98.

53 For a detailed account of the Congress (in which Chaim Herzog participated as well, as interpreter), see Gelber, Yoav. *Toldot ha-Hitnadvut, Vol. 3: Nos'ey ha-Degel* (History of Volunteering: Bearers of the Flag). Jerusalem: Yad Ben Tzvi Publications, 1983, pp. 485-486.

54 Rosenfarb, Chava. *Brif zu Abrashn* (Letters to Abrasha). Tel Aviv: Y.L. Peretz Publishers, 1992, pp. 800-801.

55 *Mankowitz*, p. 86.

56 Pinson, Koppel. 'Jewish Life in Liberated Germany: A Study of the Jewish DPs', *Jewish Social Studies*, April 1947.

57 See Irit Keinan, *'She'erit ha-Pleyta—olim o Mehagrim?'* (Surviving Remnant—Immigrants or Newcomers?), *Iyunim bi-tkumat Yisrael* (Essays on Israel's Revival), Vol. I, Sde Boker 1991 (henceforth *Olim o Mehagrim*) pp. 347-349. Irit Keynan, who collected these data, estimates the number of those who chose *aliyah* at that time as 60 to 70 percent at least.

58 *Nadich*, p. 92.

59 *Olim o Mehagrim*, pp. 347-349.

Chapter Four

1 *Warhaftig-Uprooted.*, p. 53. The rate of older people was also low: Warhaftig notes (following figures of the Institute for Jewish Affairs) that there were only 7.3 percent adults over 45. He also provides a comprehensive review of the condition of the surviving children in Europe, pp. 118-132.

2 Efras, Yisrael. *'Di kinder kolonye in Anschau' in 'Haymloze yidn'*. Buenos Aires un Saõ Paolo: Zentral farband fun Poylishe yidn in Argentine un Sao Paolo, pp. 218-219.

3 *Warhaftig*, p. 341.

4 *Bauer*, pp. 2-51.

5 See *Bentwich*, pp. 67-71. In his opinion, 1,500 children were deported during 1939-1941, but only 26 in 1942, and 138 in 1943.

6 Protocol of the Jewish Agency Directorate Meeting, 5.6.1945, (Hebrew). CZA S100/47b, pp. 11094-5.

7 *Le-hatzalat ha-sridim* (On the rescue of the remnants), Fourth *'aseyfat ha-Nivcharim*, minutes of the second session, 12.4-6.44, Document 295 from *Sefer ha-Teudoth shel ha-Va'ad ha-Leumi le-Knesset Israel be-Eretz Yisrael 1918-1948* (*Documents of the National Committee of Knesset Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael, 1918-1948*), Moshé Atiash, ed., Jerusalem, 1963.

8 Quoted in *Weitz*, p. 93.

9 *Bentwich*, p. 75.

10 *Ibid.*, 65-77.

11 Protocol no. 13, Meeting of the *Zentral Komitet* of Liberated Jews in Bavaria, 10.14.1945 (German), YIVO LS, MK488, file 135 (roll 15).

12 A letter from Hadassah Bimko to Z.K. Bavaria, November 19th, 1945 (Yiddish). DPG MK483, file 16 (roll 2).

13 *Belsen*, p. 125; also cf. *Warhaftig*, p.341.

14 Shalom Adler-Rudel, 'The surviving children' in Belsen, pp. 124-128.

15 Protocol no. 19, Meeting of the *Zentral Komitet* of Liberated Jews in Bavaria, 10.14.1945 (German). LS MK488, file135 (roll 15, frames 666-670).

16 *Bauer*, p. 264.

17 Protocol of the Jewish Agency Directorate Meeting, 11.21.1945 (Hebrew). CZA S100/48b, pp. 11393-4.

18 Adler-Rudel's report to the UNRRA headquarters, Hoechst, December 21, 1945 (English). In file 'The children's transfer from DP camps at the English and American occupied areas to England December, 45-June, 46'. Adler-Rudel's Private Archive, CZA A140/674.

19 Adler-Rudel to the Jewish Agency Directorate, December 31st, 1945, *ibid.* (English). Emphases mine.

20 Gershon Passanovskyi and Bronia Katz to the 'Joint', 11.23.1945, Fletling (English). DPG MK483, file 16 (roll 2, frame 204).

21 The Central Jewish Committee, Bergen-Belsen to Shalom Adler-Rudel (English). Adler-Rudel's Personal Archive, CZA A140/164.

22 Alex Keszten, 'Yeladim nitzolim' (Saved children), in: *Hineni, Shlaheni*, pp. 225-228. About this episode see also *Hoffmann*, p. 18.

23 *Belsen*, p. 128.

24 Levin, 'Di ershte baviligung zu brengen Yidishe kinder kayn frankraych' (the first initiative to bring Jewish children to France). In *Levin* (*Noch'n churb'an*). This article contains photostats of all the correspondence between Dr. Levin with the French and the American governments and with various French relief organizations. For an additional report on this episode see *Warhaftig*, pp. 336-342.

25 The letters are reproduced in *Levin*, p. 67.

26 *Levin*, p. 69.

27 Minutes of the Jewish Agency Directorate session, 11.21.1945, CZA S100/48b, pp. 11386-96.

28 Yitzhak Levin, 'Di Yidishe milchume-yosmim, vos zaynen geratevet gevorn fun shmad' (The Jewish war orphans who had been saved from conversion). in *Levin*, p. 49.

29 *Warhaftig*, p. 342.

Chapter Five

1 *Zink*, p. 6.

2 *Zink*, Chapter 4; *Clay*, Chapter 4.

3 *Zink*, p. 26.

4 *Eisenberg*, p. 80.

5 See *Clay*, pp. 17-19.

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Clay*, p. 54.

9 *Clay*, Chapter 9; *Eisenberg*, Chapter 6.

10 *Clay*, Chapters 10-11.

11 *Eisenberg*, Chapter 10.

12 *Clay*, p. 61.

13 See *Zink*, Chapter 11; *Clay*, pp. 67-70.

14 *Genizi*, pp. 36-38.

15 *Genizi*, p. 35.

16 *Kochavi*, p. 17.

17 *Keidar*, p. 6; *Kochavi*, p. 26.

18 *Kochavi*, p. 1.

19 *Ibid.*, Part one, Chapter 2.

20 *Keidar*, pp. 18-23.

21 See Woodbridge, G. 1950. *UNRRA: The History of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration*, 3 vols. New York. On the history of IRO: *Holborn*. On the history of the Joint until World War II, see Bauer, Y. *My Brother's Keeper*. On the JDC in the DPs camps, see *Schwartz*. On the welfare organizations of British Jewry, see *Bentwich*. On the links between the organization and *B'richáh*, see *Livne*. See also *Hirschmann*.

22 *Blaming the Storm on the Ship: The UN from Herbert Lehman to the New Stone Age*. 27th Annual Herbert H. Lehman Memorial Lecture, by Brian Urquhart, former UN Under Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs. Lecture at Lehman College, New York City, 9 April 1996 (henceforth *Urquhart*).

23 *Kochavi*, p. 18.

24 *Holborn*, p. 221.

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Urquhart*.

27 *Op. Cit.*, p. 33.

28 See *Holborn*, Chapter 10 for description of refugee populations in care of the organization.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 167.

30 See *Livne* pp. 21-22, 34-36; see also minutes of the Jewish Agency Directorate meeting 21.11.1945, CZA S100/48b, pp. 11386-96 on the percent of Agency budget funded directly by the Joint.

31 The story of the Joint has been told by quite a few people, and from varying perspectives: see *Schwartz*.

32 *Bentwich*, Chapters 9-10.

Chapter Six

1 Brecht, Bertolt, *Collected Plays*, Vol., 2, pp. 91-91. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

2 See Zertal, Idit. *Zehavam shel ha-Yehudim* (The Gold of the Jews). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996, (henceforth *Zertal*).

3 *Hoffmann*, p. 160.

4 For a complete list of DP camps see *Königseder and Wetzel*, pp. 247-268; for additional data see *Dinnerstein*, pp. 57-70; *Hyman*, Appendices III-VI.

5 The table contains estimates, giving the reader an overall picture. In order to calculate DP figures, I used various sources, all shown here, discrepancies included.

6 In this column I began with the numbers given by *Dinnerstein* in his statistical appendix, Table A11, p. 286. From these, I subtracted the number of Jewish DPs in the left-hand column (or its median if there were several different estimates). No systematic comparison with other sources was done, as the main point of this column is the change in the size of the non-Jewish DP population over time, which presents a pattern that is different from that of the Jewish DPs. Despite the absence of systematic comparison, it is important to note that the same pattern is preserved in other sources, even though their estimates are somewhat different (either because their criteria for belonging to the DP category are different, or because they used other statistical sources). *Holborn*, for example, who bases her estimate on Allied figures (Appedices 13-17, pp. 197-201), has the following numbers of refugees handled by the IRO (which are, naturally, less than the total population of DP): 12/1946—1,037,404; 7/1947—666,775; 12/1947—639,442; 12/1948—650,747.

7 *Proudfoot,* pp. 238-239. His exact figure is 69,089 on 9.30.1945. *Proudfoot* is mostly a low estimator. As *Dinnerstein* notes (p. 276), this may be due to the fact that his estimates were made from the British Zone (although on certain occasions *Proudfoot* gives high figures, see note 8).

8 *Uprooted*, p. 43 (Table 4) lists 74,000 in Germany, 8,000 in Austria, and 16,000 in Italy in April 1946. UNRRA report No. 21 (YIVO LS MK483, file 68, roll 10, frame 310) lists 92,725 in Germany alone. We can get an idea of the growth rate by comparing to *Mankowitz* (p. 24), who draws on JDC figures—Jewish population in the U.S. zone of occupation, January 27th, 1946 (which are to be found at the Chayim Yahil personal archive, CZA) which for that time are 47,698 Jews just in the American Zone of Germany. The growth in the size of this population was thus extremely rapid (although *Mankowitz's* figures are lower than others', see note 6).

9 *Proudfoot* (p. 339) reports 105,927 in Germany, and 8,000 in Austria in 7.1.1946. No figures for Italy are given, and thus the previous numbers were assumed, and added to the total.

10 *Jakobmeyer* (p. 122) lists 167,722 in 12.1.1946 in Germany (he has no data for Austria and Italy); *Proudfoot* (again providing a low estimate) lists 173,592 Jews in Germany; and the Anglo-American Commission (quoted in Uprooted, p. 43) lists, for October 1946, 211,460 Jews in Germany, 34,000 in Austria, and 18,000 in Italy. *Mankowitz* (p. 24) lists 131,093 Jews in Germany, quoting JDC reports (Jewish population in the U.S. zone of occupation, Dec. 31st, 1946, at the Chayim Hoffmann personal archive, CZA). His figures are lowest, likely because he restricts his discussion to

the American Zone of Germany. *Hyman* (p. 146) reports low figures as well—197,005 in Germany, Austria and Italy, and another 6,000 in Berlin. He appears to base his figures on American Army reports, as given in various Jewish Yearbooks. Generally, there may be a number of reasons for the numerical discrepancies, yet most of them may be explained when the difference in reporting methods is taken into account, as is hinted above.

11 *Jakobmeyer* (p. 122) lists 914,997 for this period.

12 *Proudfoot*, whose estimates are usually the lowest, now gives the highest figures: he reports 182,000 Jews in Germany, 44,000 in Austria, and 19,000 in Italy; *Holborn* (Appendix 15, p. 199), whose data only include DPs cared for by IRO, lists 154,333 for July 31st, 1947. Jewish Agency envoy Yehoshu'a Levi reports 132,379 Jewish DPs cared for by the JDC for 9.30.1947 (based on JDC records). This figure, too, is naturally partial, hence the differences, it seems (lecture in a meeting of Palestine envoys, November 1947 "The economic condition of *She'erith ha-pleyta* in Germany and Austria" (Hebrew) CZA S86/284, "Palestine Mission to Germany 9.21.1947-12.31.1947."

13 Report by Harry Greenstein and Major Abe Hyman to the Five Organizations (English) (YIVO DPA MK490, file 13 (roll 1, frame 589) lists 164,950 Jews in Germany, Austria and Italy on 8.15.1948; A JDC report regarding the Jewish population in the British Zone in January 1948 (YIVO LS MK488, file 493, roll 41, frame 616) provides a slightly larger figure for that area—17,811 Jews. Holborn, whose numbers are low (see note 2) reports 92,944 Jews cared for by the IRO at the end of 1948 (Chapter 11, p. 189).

14 "Final report: Harry Greenstein to US Command" (YIVO LS MK488, file 80, roll 10, frame 1259ff.) lists 43,000 remaining Jewish DPs in Germany.

15 *Jakobmeyer*, p. 71.

16 See Table 10-2, chapter 10.

17 *Op. cit.*, p. 85, relying on UNRRA reports, establishes the total of 497,148 DPs who were repatriated in 1946.

18 *Ibid.*, p. 122, mentions 914,997 DPs in Germany, of these, 167,722 Jews (to which number in the table was added the estimated number of Jews in Austria and Italy).

19 *Ibid.*, Chapter 5.

20 See *Cohen*.

21 Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

22 Mischkalsky, Secretary (Landsberg) to the Jewish Committee, Munich, 12.8.1945 (Yiddish). DPG, MK483, file 16 (roll 2, frame 31).

23 B. Royzen (Salzburg) to the *She'erit ha-Pleyta* Center in Munich, 27.9.1945. *Ibid.*, frame 105.

24 *Mankowitz*, p. 144.

25 *Mankowitz*, Chapter 4.

26 Zirkular N.5, ZK (Yiddish). YIVO DPG MK483, file 73 (roll 7, frame 2).

27 UNRRA Team 90, Camp Leader Sonthofen to Central Committee of Liberated Jews, 28.10.1945. DPG MK483, file 16 (roll 2, frame 176).

28 See *Hyman*, Chapter 7; *Schwartz*, Chapter 11.

29 See *Königseder and Wetzel*, pp. 89-92.

30 Captain Matthews to Mr. B. Konichsky 13.7.1946, DP Leo Schwartz archive (roll 10, frame 95).

31 See *Keidar.*

32 In other documents the establishment of the Commission is dated November 1945. E.G., YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 13, frame 0277).

33 YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 13, frame 1231).

34 E.G., Report of the 1st year, Historical Commission, Feldafing, 1946, YIVO DPG, Group 51 (roll 13, frame 992).

35 Report from 1946, YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 13, frames 227-230).

36 YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 40, frame 1270-72).

37 Report from 1946, YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 13, frame 277).

38 Baricht fun ershte zusamenfar fun di delegirte mitarbajter fun di historishe komisjes in der amerikanishe zone in dajchland vos iz fargekumen in minchen dem 11tn un 12tn maj 1947 [Report of the 1st Conference of the delegate activists of the historical commissions in the American Zone in Germany, which Convened in Munich in the 11t-12th of May, 1947]. YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 13, frame 161).

39 Baricht, YIVO DPG, Group 51, (roll 13, frame 161).

40 Eliyahu Dobkin to E.E. Rhatigan, UNRRA Deputy Director, 28.7.1945, Frankfurt (English), CZA S86/57.

41 *Keinan*, Chapter 4.

42 On the political party key, see *Keinan*, p. 147.

43 See *Keinan*, Chapter 5, for a detailed discussion of the structure of the Palestine mission.

44 *Hoffmann* (p. 9) mentions 20 envoys in the first wave.

45 *Haganáh* Archive, group 14 *'Ha'apaláh, B'richáh, 'Akurim'*, file 770 'an up-to-date description of the operation of the Jewish Agency for Palestine' by Chayim Hoffman, pp. 17-27.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

47 *Hoffmann*, p. 18.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

50 Chapter Hoffmann to the *'aliyáh* Department, 'Report on envoy activities' 26.5.1946, CZA S86/57.

51 Literature about these actions abounds. For books that have recently been published on these subjects, see *Zertal, Shadmi*; Yehuda Ben David, *ha-Haganáh be-Eyropa* (The *Haganáh* in Europe), Tel Aviv: Tag Publishers, 1994, (henceforth *Ben-David*).

52 Koppel S. Pinson, 'Jewish life in liberated Germany: A study of the Jewish DPs', *Jewish Social Studies*, April 1947.

53 *Haganáh* archive, group 14 *'Ha'apaláh, B'richáh, 'akurim'*, file 770, 'An up-to-date description of the operation of the Jewish Agency for Palestine', by Chayim Hoffmann, pp. 17-27.

54 See various correspondences between Bundists in the camps and their colleagues in the US, YIVO Bund archive, New York, container ME-18-167, file 'Materialen fun Bundishe Gruppen in Daitshland 1946'.

55 See report on the congress in *Unser Shtime* (Paris), 19.6.1946. YIVO Bund archive, New York, Container ME-18-164, file *'Bund in Daitschland'*. See invitation to congress in Bund archive, container ME-18-165, *'Yidn in DP lagern'*. On the organizaton of the Bund in the camps, see also at other documents in same archive: ME-18-162 for various correspondence of Bundist groups in Germany; MG-2-523 for membership lists; MG-2-522 for additional correspondences of members.

56 Bund archive, YIVO New York, container ME-18-171, file *'Bund in Daitschland'*.

57 M. Ajzenbud, 'Lagern: a Zionistishe Kolonye', *Unser Tsait*, New York: January 1949.

58 See Horowitz, David. *Bi-shlichut Medina Noledet* (Emissary of a State-in-the-Making), Tel Aviv: Shocken, 1951, (henceforth *Horowitz*), pp. 65-82. See also Eilat, Eliyahu. *mi-Ba'ad le-'Arafel ha-Yamim* (Through the Mist of Time), Jerusalem: Yad Ben Tzvi, 1989.

59 See Crum, Bartley. *Behind the Silk Curtain*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1947 (henceforth *Crum*), for the report to the Anglo-American Committee by one of its members; see also *Dinnerstein*, Chapter 3; *Ganin*, Chapters 4,5; *Hyman*, Chapter 6; *Schwartz*, Chapter 12.

60 See Astor, Michael. *Geshichte fun der Frajland Lige un funem di Teritorialistishen Andank* (History of the Freiland League and of the Territorialist Movement). Buenos Aires, 1967, Chapter 9, pp. 580-582; *Wischnitzer*, p. 277; Binyamini, Eliyahu. *Medinot la-Yehudim* (States for the Jews). Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuchad, 1990, pp. 272-278.

61 Cited in *ha-Cohen*, p. 229.

62 *Olim o mehagrim*, pp. 349-350.

63 *Kochavi*, p. 79.

64 *Crum*, p. 71.

65 *Hoffmann*, p. 22; see also *B'richáh*, pp. 194-195. For a contrary opinion see *Olim o Mehagrim*, pp. 343-358.

66 M. Ajzenbud, M. 'Lagern: a Zionistishe kolonye', *Unser Tsait*, New York, January 1949.

67 See *Be-sha'ar ha-Umot*, p. 16.

68 See *Laquer*, document 21, pp. 85-94.

69 For a detailed discussion, see *Kochavi*, pp. 73-94.

70 *Weizmann*, p. 429.

71 See *Dinnerstein*, pp. 132-136.

72 *Dinnerstein*, p. 17; *B'richáh*, p. 90.

73 *Kochavi*, p. 95.

74 Protocol of the Jewish Agency Directorate meeting, 21.11.1945, CZA S100/48b, p. 11391.

75 This figure is calculated from the above table. For the sake of comparison, *Proudfoot's* figures (p. 339) yield the addition of only 36,188 in this period.

76 *Gutman*, p. 49.

77 *Gutman*, Chapter 2.

78 See *Gutman*, pp. 34-41; *Dinnerstein*, pp. 107-109, for slightly different rendering of the events.

79 For a detailed description of the exit routes see *Proudfoot*, p. 335.

80 See *Gutman*, p. 48.

81 *Proudfoot* (p. 341) notes 63,387 as the number of those who reached the western zones in July through September; *Dinnerstein* (p. 112) notes 100,000; *Keinan* (p. 60), relying on JDC data, notes over 70,000.

Chapter Seven

1 Appelfeld, Aharon. *Michvat ha-'or.* (Searing Light) Tel Aviv: ha-kibbutz ha-me'uchad, 1980, pp. 15, 19.

2 See *Bauer*, Chapter 9; *Hyman*, Chapter 10; *Dinnerstein*, Chapter 4; *Königseder and Wetzel*, pp. 47-57.

3 See *Königseder and Wetzel*, pp. 262-263; *Hyman*, Appendix IV p. 466.

4 M. Ajzenbud, M. (pseudonym A. Schmid), *Kh'hob gesen Ulm* (Reportage), *Unser Shtime*, Paris, 24.4.1947, found in YIVO Bund Archive, New York, ME-18-172, 'Deutsche lagern, Zionistische Terror'.

5 *Holborn*, Chapter 13, pp. 218-238.

6 Report to the Jewish Agency from Camp Ziegenhin near Kassel (Menucha Yoffe---8.2.47), CZA S86/57 'Activity of the envoys in Germany 1947-1950'. Additional copy in file 283.

7 Malka Shapiro to the Jewish Agency, Wetzlar, 10.1.1947, CZA S86/57, "Envoy Activities in Germany 1947-1950."

8 Minutes of the Jewish Agency Directorate meeting, 21.11.1945, CZA S100/48b, p. 11391. See also Dekel, Efraim. *Bi-Ntivey ha-B'richáh*. Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot Publications, 1959 (henceforth *Dekel*) p. 506.

9 See *Hyman*, p. 261; on UNSCOP see Pappe, Ilan. *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict 1947-1951*. London: Tauris Books, 1992, (henceforth *Pappe*), pp. 16-41, especially 25-26.

10 See for example, *Clay*, p. 232; *Genizi*, pp. 62-63.

11 See *Holborn*, p. 221; *Königseder and Wetzel*, Appendix.

12 See *Eisenberg*; see also *Clay*, Chapters 9-10.

13 See *Clay*, pp. 232-233.

14 See *Holborn*, especially Chapter 1; *Jakobmeyer*, Chapter 6.

15 Yehoshua Levi, lecture at the conference of envoys from Palestine, November 1947, 'The economic state of *She'erit ha-plyta* in Germany and Austria'. CZA S86/284 "The Palestine delegation in Germany 21.9.47-31.12.47."

16 See *Bauer*, pp. 201-208.

17 *Hyman*, p. 247.

18 See *Schwartz*, p. 100.

19 See *Hyman*, p. 249.

20 Yehoshua to Eliahu Dobkin 6.3.1947. AA, Jewish Agency file—various departments IV-208-1-5003 6/46-12/46.

21 Yehoshua Levi, lecture at the conference of Palestine envoys, November 1947, 'The economic state of Holocaust survivors in Germany and Austria'. CZA S86/284 'The Palestine delegation in Germany 21.9.47-31.12.47'.

22 See *Schwartz*, Chapter 20.

23 Kinrys Izrael to the Committee *Prezidium* at Feldafing 16.6.1947 (German and Yiddish). DPG Group 51, file 292 (roll 25, frame 737).

24 Jacob Gordon to the Camp Feldafing *Prezidium*, 17.6.1947 (German and Yiddish). DPG Group 51, file 292 (roll 25, frame743).

25 Camp Feldafing Committee—document, 2.6.1948 (German and English). DPG Group 51, file 294 (roll 25, frame 1025).

26 Camp Feldafing Committee—document, 2.6.1948 (English). DPG Group 51, file 294, (roll 25, frame 1032).

27 Camp Committec Feldafing—document, 14.9.1948 (English). DPG Group 51, file 294 (roll 25, frames 1038-9).

28 See *Shapiro*; *Keinan*, pp. 117-131.

29 E.g., *Keinan, Bauer*.

30 All the posters were written in Yiddish and taken from the Weinberg collection, YIVO Bund Archive ME18-165 'Yidn in DP Lagern'.

31 'Zum yidishn komitet fun umparteishe yidn in lager Rochelle', 3.2.1948 (Yiddish). DPG Group 51, file 918 (roll 64, frame 925).

32 Shmuel Shlomovitch to the organization department of the World Jewish Congress for Culture, 5.8.1948 (Yiddish). DPG Group 51, file 38 (roll 3, frame 1132).

33 On the decline of the Bund in the camps, see also Blattman, Daniel. *Le-ma'an Cherutenu Ve-cherutchem* (For the Sake of Our Freedom and Yours). Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1996, pp. 329-335.

34 S. Adler-Rudel to the Jewish Agency Directorate, 2.4.1947 (English). CZA S86/283 'The Palestine Delegation in Germany, 10.1.47-29.9.47'.

35 See *Holborn*, p. 221.

36 General Huebner's notes (English), 5.9.1946. *Hyman*, Appendix V, pp. 468-470.

37 See *Hyman*, p. 154.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

39 Guy Puntch, IRO Headquarters, Group 1041, Ansbach, to camp directors and committees (English). 12.11.1947. DPG Group 51, file 943 (roll 65, frame 1136).

40 Dobkin to the JDC directorate in Paris, 3.1.1947 (Yiddish). AA, Jewish Agency file, *'Aliyáh* Department IV-208-1-5019A, 12/45-11/47.

41 AJDC Paris to Dobkin, 14.2.1947 (English). AA, Jewish Agency files, *Aliyah* Department IV-208-1-5019A, 12/45-11/47.

42 Hoffmann to Dobkin, 14.2.1947. CZA S86/57 'Envoys' Activities in Germany 1947-1950'.

43 See *Holborn*, pp. 191-192.

44 DPG Group 51, file 873, Statistishe yedies fun di lerer in Schule 'Geula' Nei-Freimann (roll 62, frames 939-942).

45 DPG Group 51, file 873, Statistishe yedies fun di lerer in Schule 'Geula' Nei-Freimann (roll 62, frame 959).

46 DPG Group 51, file 873, Satistishe yedies fun di lerer in Schule 'Geula' Nei-Freimann (roll 62 frames 950-4).

47 Conversation with Naftali Grodnai who met him in Hajnówka and later on, 5.5.1997.

48 DPG Group 51, file 873, Statistishe yedies fun die lerer in schule 'Geula' Nei-Freimann (roll 62, frames 916, 920, 945); Certificate of Registration for membership in the Bund, March 1948 (Yiddish), Celnik's testimony

that he had been in a concentration camp during the war, YIVO Bund Archive 'Bund in Germany after 1945', ME 18-161. Also, Conversation with Shabtai Himmelfarb, who had taught at the same school, Tel Aviv, 4.5.1997.

49 DPG Group 51, file 874, Statistishe yedies fun di lerer in Schule 'Geula' Nei-Freimann, (roll 62, frame 1012).

50 See *Holborn*, pp. 191-192; on the discussion in camp newspapers somewhat earlier, see *Mankowitz*.

51 From Circular no. 44 by Dov Zissale, 17.11.48. Also quoted in 'Leaders Roles and Mode of Operation' (1949), AA, Files of the Education Center—Envoys Abroad VI-1-215-885.

52 See *Keinan*, p. 147. This book also contains detailed data of the delegation members' political affiliations.

53 'A report on my year of work in the Diaspora' (Dr. Bezalel Wexler, 27.8.48). AA Files of the Education Center—Envoys Abroad, VI-1-215-885.

54 Michael Deshe (Eisenstadt) to Ze'ev Chaklai, 1947. A letter describing the state of affairs in the kibbutz training groups in the Beyreuth and Regensburg regions. CZA S86/57 'Envoys' Activites in Germany 1947-1950'.

55 Menachem Braun to the Envoys Section, Ulm, 17.9.1947, CZA S86/284 'The Palestine Delegation in Germany 21.9.47-31.12.47'.

56 YIVO Bund Archive, 'Bundishe grupn in Daitshland' MG2-522.

57 YIVO, DPG Group 51, file 1010, 'Achtung! Stuttgart, 2.10.1947' (Yiddish) (roll 70, frame 0101).

58 YIVO Bund Archive, 'Materialen fun die Bundishe grupn in Daitshland 1946' ME18-167.

59 Ajzenbud, M. (Pseudonym A. Schmid), *'Kh'hob gezen Ulm* (Reportage)', *Unser Shtime*, Paris, undated (1947).

60 Louis Neikrug, HIAS representative, speaking in a meeting with the US Army's Advisor on Jewish affairs, 15.3.1948, recorded by Major Hyman (English). DP Leo Schwartz Archive, File 82 (roll 10, frame 1377 and on). Neikrug reported the following figures: 1,200 Jews immigrated to Canada; 2,200 to Australia; 12,000-14,000 to South America; 200 to South Africa; 15,000 to the US.

61 See *Wischnitzer* Appendix 1 Table 3, p. 291. Wischnitzer notes that the real number is probably larger due to illegal immigration that was recorded only later on.

62 *Ibid.*, Table 4, p. 292.

63 *Ibid.*, Table 6, p. 293.

64 *Ibid.*, Table 7, p. 294. See also Table in Chapter 9, according to which the number may have been larger.

65 Here, too, numbers differ, all based on indirect estimates: *Dinnerstein* (Table 9.2, p. 252) makes the rough estimate of 28,000 Jews who entered the US from May 1946 until December 1948; *Wischnitzer* (Appendix 1, Table 1, p. 289) claims that between 1946 and 1948, 53,720 Jews entered the US, but this figure includes Jews of all countries, including tourists; *Kochavi*, on the other hand, (p. 94) claims that only 13,000 Jews entered the US between the end of the war and late 1948. This claim (based on figures from *B'richáh* [p. 304], generally supplying inaccurate and often unsubstantiated figures), is probably not valid.

66 See *Dinnerstein*, Chapters 5-7; *Wischnitzer*, pp. 267-273.

67 There is a rich literature on the illegal immigration operations. For recent research, see Bogner, Nachum. *Oniyot ha-Mered: The Ha'apaláh 1945-48* (Ships of Revolt). Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1993; also *Zertal*; and Halamish, Aviva. *Parashat Exodus: ha-sipur ha-'amiti* (The Exodus Affair: The Real Story). Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1990.

68 Michael Deshe (Eisenstadt) to Ze'ev Chaklai, 1947. A letter describing the state of affairs in the kibbutz training groups in the Beyreuth and Regensburg region. CZA S86/57 'Envoy Activities in Germany 1947-1950'. Also found in file 283.

69 Chayim Diyamant to members of the Envoy Committee 8.2.1947, CZA S86/57 'Envoy Activities in Germany 1947-1950'. Also found in file 283.

70 Menucha Yaffe to the Jewish Agency, report on Camp Ziegenhein near Kassel, 8.2.1947. CZA S86/57 'Envoy Activity in Germany 1947-1950'.

71 L. Garfunkel to Eliyahu Dobkin, Italy (Jewish Refugee Organization) 4.10.1946. CZA S86/191 (Dobkin private archive 1946-1952).

72 Journal of the Jewish Agency mission to occupied Germany (Company 3 log), Munich, 9.2.1947. CZA S86/57 'Envoy Activity in Germany 1947-1950'.

73 Z. Chaklai, Y. Stiglitz to Chaya Bat-Yehudah in Germany. Jerusalem 19.12.1947. CZA S86/284 'Palestine Delegation in Germany 21.9.47-31.12.47'.

74 Z. Chaklai, Y. Stiglitz to Shoshana Ben Yehudah, 9.2.1948. CZA 'Palestine Delegation in Germany 21.9.47-31.12.47', S86/58.

75 Aharon Naidet to the Envoy Department, Munich, 15.10.1947. CZA S86/284 'Palestine Delegation in Germany 21.9.47-31.12.47'.

76 On the absorption of the Surviving Remnant in the state of Israel see Yablonka, Hannah. *Achim Zarim* (Alien Brothers). Jerusalem: Yad Ben Tzvi, 1994 (henceforth *Yablonka*); Markovietzky, Ya'acov. *Gachelet*

lochemet (Fighting Ember). Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1994 (henceforth *Markovietzky*).

Chapter Eight

1 On the *Haganáh* organization in Germany prior to 1948 see *Shadmi*, Chapter 6; Ben-David, Yehudah. *Cherev ba-Nechar* (A Sword in Foreign Land), Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense, 1978, Chapter 2, pp. 178-182, (henceforth *Sword*); *Ben-David*, pp. 61-71, 195-241; *Markovietzky*, Chapter 1.

2 See *Sword*, pp. 150-178.

3 *Haganáh* Archive Group 36 'The *Haganáh* in the Diaspora', file 6 'Report on the *Haganáh* Delegation to Europe', 12.2.46-31.7.48'. Nachum Shadmi to Ben Gurion. See also Yehudah Slutzky, *The History of the Haganáh, Volume 3: From Struggle to War, Part 2*, Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1973, p. 1077.

4 *Ibid.* See also *Shadmi*, p. 166.

5 See *Sword*, p. 178.

6 See *Ben-David*, p. 68.

7 See Ben Gurion, David. *Yoman Ha-Milchama* (War Diary), Gershon Rivlin and Elchanan Oren, eds. Tel-Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1982, Volume A, p. 17, from 2.12.1947 (henceforth *Ben-Gurion*); According to *Ben David* (p. 84) he had 564 commanders.

8 From the minutes of members' council meeting assembled by the general commander, 27.12.47. *Haganáh* Archive Group 36 'The *Haganáh* in the Diaspora', file 9 ' The *Haganáh* Mission in Europe'; *Ben-David*, pp. 78-83.

9 See *Markovietzky*, p. 39.

10 See *Ben-David*, p. 231.

11 DPG Group 51, file 526, *Haganáh* Headquarters at Feldafing 27.1.1948' (Yiddish), (roll 40, frame 1196).

12 Paris Conference, 29.2.1948. See *Ben-David*, p. 94.

13 Quoted in M. Sikron, 'Giyus ko'ach 'adam be-Milchemet ha-Komemiut' (Manpower Mobilization During the War of Independence). History Department, IDF General staff (henceforth *Sikron*), p. 6. IDF 159/1-46/1970.

14 *Sikron*, pp. 12-13, presents this data: fully mobilized—420 senior *Haganáh* commanders; 2,100 Command o ('*Palmach*') soldiers (and another 1,000 reservists); 1,192 *Yishuv* Policemen. Trained reservists—9,000-9,500 combat, 32,000 non-combat (excluding 32,000 *Gadna*' paramilitary youth). In addition, 2,000-2,500 '*Irgun*' and about 600 'Stern gang' people were counted.

15 See Government Yearbook, 1950, p. 61; see also cf. *Sikron*; and for detailed discussion on the mobilization see Yo'av Gelber, *Toldot ha-Hitnadvut* (A History of Volunteering), vol. 4: *Gar'in le-Tzava 'Ivry Sadir* (A nucleus for a regular Hebrew force). Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1983, Chapter. 3, 'Giyus Ha-Tzava' (The mobilization of the army), (henceforth *Gelber II*); and cf. *Haganáh*, part II, Volume 3, Chapter 74, 'giyus ha-yishuv ve-tichnun ha-ma'aracha' (mobilization of *Yishuv* and the planning of the campaign).

16 *Haganáh*, p. 1459. Data are taken from a report of the Central Bureau of Statistics, written by a directive of the Jewish Agency Foreign Department at the end of 1947. *Gelber II* (pp. 134-135) has numbers, too, indeed somewhat different. *Gelber II* does not refer to the above numbers.

17 Instructions and summations of the Center for the Service of the People (*'ha-Merkaz le-Sheyrut ha-'Am'*), an emergency regulation. IDF 795-1042/1949, pp. 33.

18 See *Gelber II*, p. 137.

19 *Sikron*, pp. 23, 58.

20 Numerical discrepancies are found here, too: this figure is taken from *Haganáh*, p. 1461; *Gelber II* writes (p. 146): "In April it became clear that the mobilization did not happen as projected. Instead of 81,000 men, only 71,000 reported to the Census." He quotes Protocol #65 of the 'Center for the Service of the People, April 18th, 1948. Elsewhere (p. 147), however, he quotes Avni'el, a Center man, who on April 13 said that: "Until now 85,146 men and women have been drafted." Cf. *Markovietzky*, Chapter 4; see also *Sikron* (pp.28-29), whose figures are higher: 94,759 recruited until 4.15.1948.

For higher estimates, see Ostfeld, Zehava. *Tzava Nolad* (An Army is Born). Tel-Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 1994, (henceforth *Ostfeld*), Part I, Chapter 3, p. 54 (quoting an IDF source): "Until 15.4.48, 104,758 men and women of ages 17-35 were drafted [...] 175,355 men were drafted to the end of October, and until the end of 1948 approximately 198,505 men, of them 164,089 males, including immigrants [...] as a total 116,184 men were mobilized during February 1948-June 1949."

21 See Yizra'eli, Yosef. *Bi-Shlichut Bitchonit* (On a Security Mission). Tel-Aviv: Am Oved, 1972, (henceforth *Yizra'eli*), p. 81; on the structure of mobilization in the IDF Manpower Department see *Ostfeld*, pp. 387-390.

22 *Ben-Gurion*, January 1944. Quoted in *Weitz*.

23 See *Ben-Gurion*, p.310, a diary entry dated 18.3.1948.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 302, a diary entry dated 3.15.1948.

25 See *Shadmi*, pp. 201-202; see also *Yablonka*, pp. 79-96.

26 See *Ben-Gurion*, p.302, note 7, for a letter (co-signed with Yisrael Galili) to *Mossad* agent Ze'ev Schind (*alias* Danny), 18.3.1948. The letter adds

instructions regarding selective immigration of 18-35 year olds, "capable of carrying a weapon." Cf. also Volume 2, p.635, where Ben-Gurion complains that although "North Africa is an inexhaustible source [of immigrants], yet it is composed of difficult human material—its cultural level is low." Cf. Volume 3, pp. 814, 922-923.

27 See *Ben-David*, p. 232: "The draft in the DP camps was the exclusive responsibility of the *Haganáh,* as were organizing, training and arranging meetings. Other public institutions cooperated, helping both materially and by neutralizing elements that had the potential of interrupting [*Haganáh* activities]."

28 To all the centers of the 'People Service Committee' in the camps by the 'the Committee for the Service of the People' in the camps, by the Jewish Agency for Palestine, Munich, 3.16.48 (Yiddish). This circular is found in many places in YIVO DPG, Group 51. For example, file 304 (roll 26, frame 1144); cf. file 1355 (roll 96, frame 517), among others.

29 See *Königseder and Wetzel*, p. 253.

30 A letter from the Camp Committee, Feldafing, 3.16.1948 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 277 (roll 24, frame 113).

31 Protocol of the Camp Committee meeting, Feldafing, 3.19.1948 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 282 (roll 24, frame 628).

32 From Camp Committee, Feldafing, to comrade Eyfe, *Z.K.* Munich, 3.21.1948 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 304 (roll 26, frame 1082).

33 Chayim Hofmann to Eliahu Dobkin, Munich, 4.25.1948. CZA S86/58 'The Palestine delegation in Germany 1947-1950'.

34 See *Clay*, Chapter 18, 19.

35 See *Dinnerstein*, Chapter 7.

36 See *Genizi*, pp. 105-133.

37 Minutes of a meeting held in the office of the Jewish Advisor on Monday, March 15, 1948. YIVO LS, file 82 (roll 10, frames 1378-1386).

38 William Haber to the Five Organizations, 4.1.1948 (English). YIVO LS file 75 (roll 10, frames 820-821).

39 See *Dinnerstein*, p. 181.

40 Yitzhak Sheinberg, '*Shir ha-Ma'apilim*' (The Illegal Immigrant Song). In Z. Ariel, M. Blich, N. Persky. *Mikra'ot Yisrael li-Shnat ha-Limudim ha-Revi'it* (Israel's Reader for Fourth Grade). Jerusalem: Massada (A. Pel'i), 5723 (1963).

41 A document by H.S., 3.8.48, HA, group 14, '*Ha'apaláh, B'richáh, 'Akurim*', file 112, 'ha-Mossad le-Aliyah Tel-Aviv Tzarfat' (The Institute for Immigration, Tel-Aviv).

42 *Ibid.*, to Arnon from Yis'ar, Danny, no. 32, 1640, 3.6-7.48.

43 *Ibid.*, Volume A, p. 293 (3.12.1948).

44 *Ibid.* to Yis'ar, Ben Ya'akov, Tal, from Arnon, no. 119, 1728/29, 3.29.48.

45 *Ibid.* to Yis'ar, Leonard, from Arnon, number 194 urgent, 1313/30, 3.29.48.

46 *Ibid.* to Sidney, from Arnon, number 5., 1515, 2.4.48. See also no. 7, 1438, 4.4.48.

47 *Ibid.* to Arnon from Yis'ar and Dani. Number 5. 1300. 4.1-2.48.

48 See *Ostfeld*, part III, Chapter 3, note 22 (p. 965): "A first mobilization order to *GACHAL*' (Foreign Draft) was issued on 4.4.48. Instructions and summations of the Census Center, 399/62/2. This order annulled a former directive which exempted every immigrant for a period of six months as of his day of arrival. A letter from the Manpower Department/mobilization and absorption from 4.3.48 5205/49/55"; see *Sikron*, p. 25.

49 Envoys of the 'Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad' in Germany to Yisrael Galili, 4.11.48, Munich. HA 22-550-80 (Galili files).

50 The Third Congress protocols 3.30.1948. YIVO, DPG, Group 51, file 5 (roll 1, frame 569).

51 Invitation to the Third Congress, March 1948. YIVO DPG, Group 51, file 4 (roll 1, frame 547).

52 Protocol of the Third Congress of *She'erit ha-pleyta*, 3.31.1948, (Yiddish). YIVO DPG, group 51, file 294 (roll 5, frames 568-581).

53 Protocol of the Third Congress of *She'erit ha-pleyta*, 6te zitsung—baricht fun der permanenz-komisie (6th session—Report of the Permanent Committee). YIVO, DPG, Group 51, file 294, (roll 5, frames 639-641).

54 *Unser tsait*, June 1948, p. 33.

55 See *Ben-David*, p. 233, my emphasis.

56 HA, unit 36, 'ha-Haganah ba-Gola' (The *Haganáh* in Diaspora), file 7 immigration base 1, (Marseille), report 3.1.48-7.20.48.

57 Gordonia Austria's Leadership to the Tel-Aviv Administration, 3.28.1948. Gordonia Archive, Hulda, box 60, file 9 (copy in *Ha'apaláh* archive, Tel-Aviv University, 24-95.11).

Chapter Nine

1 In Hannan Hever and Moshé Ron (editors). *Ve-Ein Tichla la-Kravot ve-la-Hereg* (No Aim to Battles and Killing). Tel-Aviv: ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad, 1983, pp. 8-10.

2 See *Ben-David*, p. 233.

3 *Hoffmann*, p. 160.

4 "Zirkular Nr. 31" 4.11.1948, Munich (Yiddish). YIVO DPG, Group 51, File 73 (roll 7, frame 25). This specific copy was sent to Camp Rochelle, but this

archive contains many others, found in files of various camps, e.g., File 48 (roll 5, frame 223) of Camp Schwabach.

5 Goldman Zigmund to Z.K. Organization Department, Schwabach, 4.19.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 941 (roll 65, frame 962).

6 Camp Committee and *Giyus* Commission, Attel, to *Z.K.*, 4.19.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 38 (roll 3, frame 985).

7 *Bauer*, p. 264.

8 YIVO BA, box MG2-108 "daitshe lagern", file "zionistishe shikanes oif bundistn."

9 *Ibid.*

10 *Yahil*, p. 160.

11 *Königseder and Wetzel*, p. 260.

12 Commission for the Service of the People to Jewish Committee, Rochelle, 4.30.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 928 (roll 64, frame 1326).

13 Commission for the Service of the People to Jewish Committee, Rochelle, 4.30.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 918 (roll 64, frame 902).

14 Protocol of Camp Committee meeting, Rochelle, 4.18.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 892 (roll 63, frame 738).

15 Employment Department to Religious Department, Rochelle, 4.18.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 943 (roll 64, frame 1326).

16 Commission for the Service of the People to Jewish Committee, Rochelle, 5.28.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 943 (roll 65, frame 905).

17 Commission for the Service of the People to Jewish Committee, Rochelle, 5.28.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 943 (roll 65, frame 908). File 924 (roll 65, frame 1080) contains a similar order, dated 3.30.48.

18 Abe Cohen to Dr. A. Kohane, Frankfurt, 7.14.48 (English). YIVO DPG, group 51, file 37 (roll 3, frame 893).

19 See for instance YIVO DPG, group 51, file 1010 (roll 70, frame 127), where the Sanctions Commission in Stuttgart discusses punitive actions to those failing to levy *mas'am lochem.*

20 Jewish Committee, Eschwege to all group leaders, 4.29.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG, group 51, file 253 (roll 22, frame 130).

21 Eschwege Bundist Group to Bund leadership in Germany, 6.2.48 (Yiddish). YIVO BA MG-2-522 "Bundishe grupn in daitchland."

22 To *Z.K.* members from Manpower Department, Munich (Yiddish). YIVO DPG, group 51, file 76 (roll 24, frame 648).

23 Protocol of Camp Feldafing *Prezidium*, session 6.6.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG, group 51, file 282 (roll 24, frame 648).

24 See YIVO DPG, Group 51, e.g., files 309, 316, 394, 483, 504, 526.

25 Protocol of Camp Feldafing Prezidium session, 6.6.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG, group 51, file 282 (roll 24, frame 652).

26 To Draft Committee from Prezidium, Feldafing 7.7.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPG Group 51, file 504, (roll 3, frame 4).

27 "Schwartze Liste", Feldafing 4.6.48. YIVO DPG Group 51, file 504 (roll 39, frames 3-6).

28 YIVO BA, MG-2-523, "Bundishe grupn in daitchland", form filled out on 3.30.48.

29 Moshé Ajzenbud (Melbourne) to the author, 5.2.96.

30 Employment Office, PCIRO, Area IV, Nei Freimann, to Directorate of Public School in Nei Freimann, 8.22.48 (Yiddish). YIVO BA, box MG-2-108, "Daitshe lagern", file "Tzionistishe shikanes oif bundistn."

31 To Elster Yitzhak from Steyr Draft Committee, 5.26.48 (Yiddish). YIVO BA, box ME-18-172, "Daitshe Lagern", file "Tzionistishe teror."

32 Protocol of the Camp Committee, Styer, 4.12.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPA, Group 51c, file 488 (roll 19, frame 596).

33 Protocol of the Camp Committee, Styer, 5.31.48 (Yiddish). YIVO DPA, Group 51c, file 488 (roll 19, frame 601).

34 See dozens of additional documents in the same file—488 (roll 19).

35 From B. Dubnov, Salzburg, 6.2.48. IDF 664/580/56, p. 426.

36 Michael Astor, *Geshichte fun der freiland lige, un funem di teritorialistishe gedank*. 2 Volumes, 1967, New York: Freiland lige Publishing, Part II. There appear to be more relevant documentation in the Archives of the American Army, perhaps also in those of relief organizations.

37 *Unser Shtime* (Our Voice), Paris, 6.24.47

38 William Haber to Meir Grossman, 6.10.48, Section 5 (*Giyus*), p. 7 (English). YIVO LS, file 75 (roll 10, frame 851).

39 Hoffmann, p. 160.

Chapter Ten

1 Appelfeld, Aharon. *Michvat ha-'Or* (The Scorching of the Light). Tel Aviv: ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad, 1980, p. 63.

2 ISA, 2382/11/Foreign 'Reports from Germany'.

3 *Ibid.*, 'Brig. Gen. Thomas L. Harrold (Director of Civil Affairs HQ EUCOM) to Dr. Chayim Hoffman, July 8th 1948'.

4 See *Ben-David*, *Sword*, also *Markovietzky*, p. 42.

5 See *Markovietzky*, Chapter 1; *Gelber II*, pp. 162-163; *Haganáh*. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1973, pp. 1464-1484.

6 See *Markovietzky*, Chapter 6.

7 'To Israel Amir and Aharon Remez from Israel Galili', *Haganáh* Archive, 28-P-8050 'the Galili files'.

8 Dov Shilansky proposing an item for the *Knesset's* agenda on 13.3.1978. Cited in *Markovietzki.*

9 Nahum Shadmi, 'Report of the *Haganáh* mission in Europe 12.2.46-31.7.48'. *Haganáh* archive, group 36 (*Haganáh* in the Diaspora), file 6.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Hoffmann,* p. 160.

12 *Markovietzky*, Chapter 5.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

14 ISA, 533/14/Foreign 'Jewish Communities in Germany', 21.5.49.

15 See Sivan, Emmanuel. *Dor Tashach: Mitos, Dyokan ve-Zikaron* (1948'ers: Myth, Portrait and Memory). Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1991, pp. 75-80; *Markovietzky*, pp. 195-196.

16 See Shamir, Shlomo. *Be-chol Mechir—li-Yrushalayim...* (To Jerusalem, at All Cost...). Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1994, (henceforth *Shamir*).

17 *Ibid.*, p. 490; On immigration dates of the fallen, see Yitzhak Lamdan (editor), *Yizkor: Parshiyot chayeyhem u-motam shel ha-noflim* (In Memoriam: The Life and Death of the Fallen). Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publications, 1955, Vol. I, pp. 426, 471-472, 693, 716.

18 Testimony of Ofer Avissar, deputy commander Company B. *Shamir*, p. 200.

19 For an important comparison between the Polish and German Jewish communities in the interbellum period see Weiss, Yfaat. *'Etniyut ve-'Ezrachut: yehudey germanya vi-yhudey polin 1933-1940* (Citizenship and Ethnicity: the Jews of Germany and the Jews of Poland, 1933-1940). Jerusalem: The Hebrew University Magnes Press, Jerusalem, The Leo Baeck Institute and the R. Koebner Center for German History, 2001. See also Grodzinsky, Yosef. Between Loewenbergs and Litvaks, *Ha'aretz* 16.2.2002.

20 Frankel, Daniel. *'Al pi tehom: ha-mediniyut ha-Tsionit u-sh'elat yehudei Germanya 1933-1938* (On the Brink of the Abyss: Zionist Policy and the Question of Germany's Jews 1933-1938). Jerusalem: Magness Press, 1994, (henceforth *Frankel*), Chapter 3.

21 *Frankel*, p. 108.

22 Cf. Ben-Gurion's famous derogatory comments on North-African Jews, Ben-Gurion, Cf. Volume 3, pp. 814, 922-923.

23 Emissaries of *ha-Kibbutz ha-Me'uchad* movement in Germany to Israel Galili, 11.4.48, Munich. *Haganáh* archive 22-550-80, 'Galili files'.

24 *Jakobmeyer*, p. 71.

25 See Welner, Aizik. 'Fahrenwald, the last Jewish DP camp in Germany, 1951-1957', M.A. thesis at Bar-Ilan University, 1978.

26 Thus, for example, in *Jakobmeyer* and *Holborn*.

27 According to Proudfoot (p. 425), the number of immigrants to Israel is 132,019; Dinnerstein gives the figure of 136,000 (he quotes the US Government's DPC—a commission that took care of DPs and issued official reports—p. 284, Table A.9). As both figures regard the number of those arriving between 7.1.1947-12.31.1951, I took a conservative approach, which in fact increases the estimate of those arriving to Israel: I chose the higher figure, and enlarged it a bit to correct for the (extremely low rate of immigration) from the DP camps during 1945-1946. These low rates stem from the British policy, that enforced the recommendations of the 1939 White Paper, and the struggle of the Zionists against this policy which sometimes included a rejection of immigration certificates, especially at the period right after the end of the War. That this is the case can be gleaned from the complete figures of immigration to Palestine in 1945-1946, by the immigration tables to Israel (Israel Statistical Yearbook, 1950, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. Jerusalem: GPO, 1950, p. 29, Table 1): 1945—13,121; 1946—17,760; 1947—21,542; 1948—118,993; 1949—239,141. In addition to the low figures, it must be noted that the few immigrants that did arrive to Palestine in 1945-1946 came not from the DP camps, but rather through various routes devised by the *B'richáh* organization, mostly through Black Sea ports (see *B'richáh*). There is yet another reason that the figure here is higher than the actual rates of DPs who naturalized in Israel: The rate of emigration in the first years of the state. During 1948-1951, 16,647 Jews of European descent emigrated from Israel, of them 10,598 Jews from Poland, Romania, Germany and Austria, many of whom may have come from the DP camps (see *Yablonka*, Table 12, p. 279, taken from Israel Statistical Yearbook 1955-56, p. 41). These must be deducted from the total number of immigrant DPs. Unable to obtain an accurate figure for the emigrant DPs, I left the figure as is, making it an even higher estimate than the actual number. See note 14.

28 *Dinnerstein* (pp. 287-288, Table A.15) lists 137,450 as the total number of Jews arriving in the US during 1945-1952. While the majority arrived from the DP camps, one must subtract the number of Jews coming from other places from this number. The same table lists 17,334 Jews who immigrated to the US during 1949-1952 with immigration visas (there was hardly any such immigration in earlier years). These Jews were not DPs. It appears that they mostly immigrated from Israel (probably many DPs who could not get absorbed in Israel—see note 19 about emigration). Subtracting these from the number of immigrants to the US brings the total number to approximately 120,000 (137,450-17,334=120,1160). *Holborn* (p. 414) provides somewhat of a corroboration, as her figures are similar.

29 *Wischnitzer* (Table 6, p. 293) reports that 4,342 Jews immigrated to Brazil, and 1,149 to Argentina during 1945-1947. *Proudfoot* (p. 360, Table 36) estimates the number of Jews who immigrated to Brazil and other Latin American countries at 10,000. His figures are generally low, and if one may judge by the HIAS reports in the camps, the actual numbers were much higher. Cf. a report by Louis Neikrug, the HIAS representative, in a meeting with the Advisor on Jewish Affairs of the U.S. Army, 3.15.1948 (minutes taken by Major Hyman, YIVO LS, file 82, roll 10, frame 1377ff.). Neikrug reported the following figures regarding Jewish immigration to the West: to Canada—1,200 (see note 16 below); to Australia—2,200; to South America—12,000-14,000; to South Africa—200; to the United States—15,000.

30 Between 1945-1947 7,756 Jews immigrated to Canada (*Wischnitzer*, Table 4, p. 292), and an additional 12,000 during 1950-1952 (*Proudfoot*, p. 360, Table 36). The lower figure corrects for the Jews immigrating to Canada not from DP camps. *Wischnitzer's* figures only go to mid-1948 (sometimes even not reaching this date). Therefore, the only way to get a very rough estimate is indirectly, through other sources, which is what I have done.

31 *Proudfoot, ibid.*, reports 4,745 Jewish immigrants from Europe to Australia during 1946-1950, yet this figure appears too low an estimate: first, *Wischnitzer* himself contradicts this claim (Table 7, p. 294), and reports 5,423 Jews who arrived in Australia during 1945-1947. Second, a later, more detailed estimate was done by Rubinstein, W.D. in his *The Jews in Australia, Vol. 2: 1945 to the Present.* (Australia: William Heinmann, 1991). He reports of 14,279 Jewish immigrants to Australia during 1946-1951 (p. 68). Most of these were of European descent, yet of these I subtracted 2,500 escapees to Shanghai from before and during the war, who later arrived to Australia, and perhaps some others who came from Europe and not from Allied occupied territories.

32 *Proudfoot* (Table 37, p. 362) reports 38,958 Jews in the Western Zones of Germany at the end of 1950. A document named "Final Report: Harry Greenstein to US command" (YIVO LS, file 80, frame 1249ff.) reports 43,000 Jews in Germany and Austria in late October 1949, out of whom 21,000 were outside the camps, integrated to society to some degree. It is reasonable to assume that among those living outside the camps, there was some tendency to remain in Germany. Independently, it is also possible to estimate, though roughly, that those who did consider immigration were not interested in Israel. The Greenstein Report describes "the DPs' unwillingness to go the Israel," because of the housing shortage there (p. 6). Among those who did immigrate, about 25,000 went to the United States (*Dinnerstein*, p. 251). A few went to Israel, only to return to Germany after awhile. This estimate, while rough, is conservative in the sense that it tends to maximize immigration to Israel. There is no known method to obtain a

more accurate one. Dr. Hoffmann notes in his final report "twenty thousand" DPs in Germany (p. 174). My conservative methods have therefore brought me to this figure, which is most likely too low.

33 Here, too, it is hard to tell who returned home, who immigrated via Germany, and who from other places. *Proudfoot* (Table 36, p. 360) reports some 25,000 European Jewish immigrants coming to France, Belgium, Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden during 1946-1950. I assumed (conservatively) that one-third of those came from the DP camps.

34 *Dinnerstein*, quoting the DPC (DP Committee) report, p. 252, Table 9.2; similar figures are also found in *Holborn*, p. 414.

35 See *Dinnerstein*, Chapter 9.

36 *Keinan*, for example, estimates (without demographic reasoning) the number of DPs at a quarter of a million, and claims that about 60 percent of them came to Israel (p. 11).

Epilogue

1 This speech is considered to be a defining moment in Israeli history, as it is thought to have exposed Israel's offensive strategy of the 1950s which culminated in the part the IDF played in the Anglo-French Suez Operation of fall 1956. For discussion see Morris, Benny: *Israel's Border Wars 1949-1956*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.

2 In Moshé Haim Efrayim Bloch, ed., *Dovev siftey yeshenim* (from the lips of the sleepy), part 3. New York: Tif'eret Publishers, 1965, p. 265.

3 See *Cohen*.

4 The *Haganah/Mossad* covention in Paris conference, 29.2.1948. Cf. *Ben-David*, p.94.

5 Summary of the directorate meeting, Jewish Agency mission in Munich, Germany, 17.8.48. *Ha'apaláh* project archive, Tel Aviv University, 44.15-1 (photocopied from Lochamei ha-Geta'ot archive).

6 Letter by the leadership of the Gordonia youth movement, Austria (Linz) to movement secretariat in Tel Aviv, 28.3.48. *Ha'apaláh* project archive, Tel Aviv University, 24-95.11 (from Gordonia-Young Maccabean, Chulda archive, container 60, file 9).

7 Baer, Yitzhak and Ben-Zion Dinburg, *Megamatenu* (Our aim), *Zion Aleph, 1*, 1936. For a recent critical analysis see Raz-Karkotzkin, Amnon. 'Galut be-toch ribonut' (Exile in Sovereignty), *Te'oria u-Vikoret* (Theory and Criticism), 5, 1994, pp. 113-132.

8 Ben-Zion Dinur. *Mikra'ot Yisrael le-Chitah Chet* (an Eighth Grade Reader), Efrati and Melamed, eds., 1956, p. 221.

9 Cf. *Ashes*, p. 265.

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About the Author

Yosef Grodzinsky is Professor of Psychology at Tel Aviv University, and Professor and Canada Research Chair in Neurolinguistics at McGill University. He has been investigating language mechanisms in the brain for many years, and has published several books and numerous research articles on the subject. He has been involved in historical research for a decade, focusing on Jewish national movements around the time of the Holocaust, and the relation between these and the establishment of the State of Israel. He has published extensively on these topics in the Hebrew scholarly and literary press. An earlier version of this book was published in Hebrew in 1998 under the title *Good Human Material*.

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YOSEF GRODZINSKY
is Professor of Psychology at Tel Aviv University, and Professor and Canada Research Chair in Neurolinguistics, McGill University.

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